



















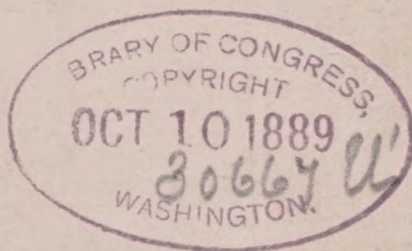






# Priest • and • Puritan.

By ✓  
Sorenso *[illegible]*



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# PRIEST AND PURITAN

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It was the Sabbath after Conference. The Rev. Charles Foster, now entered upon his second year as pastor of the Methodist Church in Mortonville, has shut himself into his study to take a last look at his sermon, and bring his mind into a fitter condition for the morning service.

Instead of seating himself at once, he laid his manuscript on his desk, and going to a window that faced northward, stood for some time looking intently at an object standing among the elms at the northeast corner of the village.

It was the new French chapel—built during the year, and recently dedicated.

An unprejudiced observer, who had an appreciative sense of the picturesque, would have been charmed with the view from the study window.

But—judging from his looks—the Rev. Charles Foster was not an unprejudiced observer, or if he was, he had no eye for such beauty as Nature and Art had combined to produce in the scene before him.



Silent, motionless, with his arms folded upon his breast, he was standing before the window, when the rays of the ascending sun finding an opening through the tree-tops, stole in and fell upon something that arose from the chapel roof, and in an instant—as if it were suddenly raised into prominence, there stood out before him a gilded cross.

He started, and his countenance softened perceptibly.

“Sacred emblem, even there!” he said, in a low tone. “O how gladly,” he continued, “would I find a spiritual beauty corresponding to that of its buildings and forms of worship in the institution that so boldly and confidently holds the cross up to the world! But I do not find it.

“Is it because I am blind and cannot, or prejudiced and will not see it? Ah, great and powerful organization, now represented here, are you developing the spiritual natures of the millions who so regularly go up to your temples to participate in your elaborate ceremonies? “Until I am convinced you are, I can have in my heart no fraternal feeling for your representative here.”

Having said this, he turned his eyes away from the chapel, and looking across the Shallow—a little stream that bounded the village on the west—fixed them upon a house standing in the shade of some large maples, and on a slightly bluff well back from the river—a place that rumor said, Father Le Grand had bought in the name of his church and was to occupy.



A look of sadness settled upon the grave face of the minister. He heaved a deep sigh, left the window abruptly and went to his desk.

He was born in that house on the bluff, and that had been his home until he reached maturity, when he went away to complete his studies for the ministry.

After an absence of many years, he had come back the year before to preach. And there, in the place of his nativity, which had been a strong-hold of Methodism for nearly forty years, and during his ministry, that enemy of free thought, and mockery of Christianity, as he considered it—Romanism—had secured a foothold !

He had come back to see a foreign priest—a being whom his ancestors would have distrusted and feared—preparing to shelter himself under their family roof tree. Surely, there was ample cause for the minister's sigh and look of pain.

When he reached his desk, as he looked down, his eyes fell upon these words :

“The Lord reigneth.”

These were the text of the sermon he was to preach that morning, in which he had labored to show that in all things, from the humble affairs of the individual to the great events that stir the nation and the world, Providence controls the minds and forces that are at work. Sometimes men can see this Divine influence—not always. But it is always shaping and directing events, though not always recognized.



He had written this sermon as much for his own as for his people's good. His faith was sorely tried by what he saw taking place, and he would strengthen it. And still, within a few moments he had allowed himself to doubt what he had aimed to prove.

Kneeling beside his desk, he offered up a silent and earnest prayer. Then he arose, and read his manuscript preparatory to going to church.

The prayer, or the reperusal of the sermon, or both combined, gave him new strength. When he had finished reading, he quickly took his pen and added as follows :

“Yes, my brethren, God surely reigns. And seated on His throne He will not only see that His plan of salvation shall ultimately succeed, but He will also see that no event shall delay for a day or an hour its final triumph.

“Finite minds may sometimes fear that what seems a victory for Satan in a certain quarter, blocks the progress of God's kingdom.

“Not so, my brethren. He permits sometimes what seems reverses because—in some way which we are unable to understand—they are carrying out His purpose. Take courage. The dominion of Satan is surely lessening, while the kingdom of our God is as surely increasing.”

With renewed faith he now went forth to deliver his message.

He had accomplished that for which he entered his study. Indeed, perhaps never before during his min-



istry had he become so thoroughly filled with his theme as he was that morning. In spite of the fact that the enemy had approached so near, and had planted his fortress on high ground that overlooked the humble structure where God was wont to meet his people, the minister was undismayed. There was hope in his heart, and a look of determination on his face as he repeated the words of the text :

“The Lord reigneth.”

A leader in the church militant is sometimes likened to a general in the army : and in some things there seems to be a resemblance. But as one is by profession a man of war and the other a man of peace, we should expect to find more contrasts than resemblances.

And yet if the reader had seen the Rev. Charles Foster when, after having left his house, he paused for a moment before descending the steps which led to the street, and looked in the direction of the little French Chapel, he might have been in doubt as to which weapon—the Sword of steel or of the Spirit—this clerical gentleman preferred to wield in a certain quarter.

Could it be possible that in the breast of this worthy man there was just then something not unlike the emotion of a general on the field of battle, who, looking at the enemy on the eve of an engagement, expresses in a glance, both wish and determination to annihilate him ?

Let no injustice be done the minister by a misrepresentation of his expression. Not every servant of God—as is recorded of some—reveals the holy purpose of his



heart in a countenance glowing with an unnatural, a spiritual light : and still, that high purpose may be there.

The Rev. Charles Foster was not vindictive. He was often made sorrowful by what seemed to him the perverse course of men or circumstances : but malice he never felt towards any human being.

The frown which darkened his brow as he turned on the landing of the steps to look northward, presaged no harm—at least not directly to the pretty little building that, so high above him, and half hidden, seemed almost like a bird's house, nestling among the tree tops.

Neither did that look foreshadow a controversial strife between minister and priest, nor threaten in any way the peace.

This devout and worthy disciple of Wesley had not gone back to the Crusades for his inspiration. And he would be the last man in the world to incite denominational contention.

What then did it mean—that stern, determined expression which had settled upon his countenance? It meant that the easy-going, half-hearted mode of Christian warfare—of which he stood self-accused—had come to an end. That war indeed was about to begin : active and relentless war—not against sect, or leader : not against individuals but against sin and Satan.

It was to be an offensive war: and the mode of assault chosen by this aroused Christian warrior was the one most dreaded by the ruler of darkness, namely, a “ Revival.”

A revival! What good Methodist ever doubted its effi-



cacy against all threatening evils? The Methodist pastor had determined to set in motion at once the machinery of that instrumentality of salvation, not doubting that by so doing the spread of error would be checked, and some souls brought within the fold and saved.

Such was the effect produced on the mind and heart of the Rev. Charles Foster by the advent of Romanism in Mortonville.

There was but one other person in Mortonville, not a Catholic, who felt anything like the interest of the Methodist clergyman in the addition of the new church : and that individual had indirectly been the cause of the innovation. Humphrey Morton, by whom the village was founded and from whom it took its name, had for many years been the prosperous owner of one mill.

He grew ambitious, and burned for the glory of possessing two. The second one was built, and behold when it was completed the requisite number of operators could not be found at home, and an agent was despatched to Canada to bring some from there.

Within a very few years from the time the new mill was started, there was a priest and then a chapel at Mortonville. Mr. Morton contributed the land to build on, and a generous sum of money to aid in the construction of the chapel. For he saw plainly that with a church and priest these people would be contented and orderly.

Humphrey Morton was something of an autocrat in Mortonville. Why shouldn't he be? Three-fourths of



the buildings in the village were monuments of his industry and thrift : and at least that proportion of the population got their living from his mills. His two large brick factories with their satellites, the tenements, covered the ground for nearly a quarter of a mile on the west side of Main street, and reached back nearly to the Shallow.

The manufacturer was not a man to pay much attention to anniversary days or he would not have allowed the day before to have passed without some celebration, for it was the last day of his fortieth year in the village he had founded. He was not, however, unmindful of the fact: and as he sat in his great arm-chair this April Sabbath morning in his house on High street and looked down upon the silent workshops and all of his other possessions stretching northward and southward, there was certainly depicted upon his face great satisfaction and contentment. He was old in years, having passed his seventieth birthday.

But what a vigorous old man he seemed ! Of medium height, his frame was well filled out, and yet not overweighed with superfluous flesh, like some old men who retain their appetites, but cease to exercise. He was still intensely active.

A large well-shaped head surmounted his broad and massive shoulders. The forehead was high, broad, and altogether nobly fashioned.

His eyes, not quite as black or sharp as in earlier days, still retained much of their original lustre. The hair—iron gray—though thin, covered the entire crown : and



as it received attention only in the morning, it lay in graceful tangles, like threads of silk crossed and recrossed about the head. He was a man of large brain, indomitable will, and limitless courage.

He started poor. When a boy, he learned how to make brick : at eighteen he was a carpenter and joiner working by the day : at twenty a school teacher—and he taught several terms in the town where he was destined afterwards to establish a large industry, and where, in one of his pupils he found a wife.

A man of great versatility, he acquired the knowledge of dam-building and built the dams which gave the power for his mills, as he had made the brick with which his mills and tenements were built. The house he lived in, and to which he had taken his bride, was built mostly by his own hand.

He had been successful. He was bound to succeed in spite of floods and fires whose ravages had time and again failed to dishearten him. Somehow or other it had fallen to his lot to be what he was—a manufacturer : and industry, good judgment and great financial ability had made him well to do.

He attended to his business. He put into it the vigor of his mind and body. He knew no other way to work if anything was to be accomplished. He never stopped to ask himself if he had chosen the work he was best fitted for, but taking it for granted that he had, he went ahead. Such a man always succeeds.

From his dams, down the canal to the mills and including them and the houses, he had planned every



structure : and was himself the master-builder. The manner in which he handled large bodies of workmen : the strict obedience and order he required, to which the laborers cheerfully conformed: the despatch with which he accomplished large undertakings, were all Napoleonic. What a general he would have been, if war had been his calling! what a statesman ! lawyer, if he had chosen either politics or the legal profession. So thought many.

But instead of these, we find him simply a manufacturer, sitting now in his great arm-chair twirling his thumbs around each other, a well-known habit of his, and looking down upon his large possessions with a very satisfied air.

A beautiful old lady sits not far away, reading. He calls her "Mother." Many old men who do so could give no reason for it. But he had one. It was not that he did not like her given name, for he loved it, and had never ceased to think it the sweetest name he had ever heard since she pronounced it for him for the first time on that May morning so long ago—that day of his first school. But the reason was this : his daughter who was named after her mother—insisted on the French pronunciation. He objected, claiming that it made it a different name, and not half so good. It might do for the daughter but not for mother. He would not accept of the change, arguing that the old love would not give up the old name. The daughter laughingly persisted, and at length her father consented to a compromise as follows :



“You wish me to pronounce her name as you do. Very well—you call her ‘mother’—so will I.”

“Mamma shall avenge me, then,” replied the daughter, “by calling you ‘Father.’”

The old lady smilingly agreed to do so, and thus the matter was settled. Since then, many years had passed away, and the daughter—now herself a wife and mother—lived in a western city. Harry, the son, a man of forty, lived in New York, where he represented Humphrey Morton & Son.

The manufacturer, after sitting for some time musing upon the past, the felicitating himself upon the evidences before and around him of his success in life, arose in his quick, nervous manner, and went into an adjoining room. In a short time, he returned with a smile on his face, and a merry twinkle in his eye.

“Mr. Pope has moved in, mother,” he remarked.

Mrs. Morton raised her eyes from her book and looked at her husband.

“Mr. Pope? Who is he?” she asked.

“Why, haven’t you heard of Pope—Mr. Pius Pope, co-worker with Mr. Wesley who lives next door?”

“O, I understand now. But what levity! I am afraid you are neither a good Protestant nor Catholic.”

“On the contrary, I am both. My church is broad in its creed—very broad: and debars no one—be he member of a sect or not.”

“Indeed! I dare say then you would admit the heathen.”

“O, certainly!” exclaimed her husband, “We want



them : and what is more—we expect them. We appropriate the promise that ‘the heathen shall be given us as a possession’ or words to that effect.”

“What does this nonsense mean, father? Have you joined the Free Masons?”

“Well, yes—one kind of Free Masons. We are also free hod-carriers, free manufacturers, merchants, farmers ; and in short, free to do any good work. *Do something!* That’s our motto in the Church of Universal Endeavor.”

“Ah ! and a very good one. But I guess I won’t join until you get your church built, and your minister settled,” said Mrs. Morton, smiling, and raising her book as if to resume reading.

“But you are already a member in ‘good and regular standing :’ we have none more faithful. As to churches, this house is one ; those,” pointing to the mills, “are others. And ministers? Now, don’t faint when I say that I suppose I am as near a preacher as any one in our denomination. But *doing* rather than preaching is the rule with us. Or, perhaps I should say that doing is our preaching.”

“When do you expect to abolish the other churches?” asked his wife.

“Never. We have only added to what already existed. We believe that for the present all denominations are necessary. Men should—*must* worship God in some way : and many think that can only be done in a church. These must have a church. Let them : and I will always help them to get the one they want. And



yet there are men and women here, who by being truthful, industrious and honest, are rendering better service to the Almighty through the six days of the week than in uttering the foolish jargon often heard at the Sunday evening prayer meeting. But come, mother, we must go down and hear the gospel expounded after the manner of John Wesley."

Humphrey Morton was not what in Christian phraseology is termed "religious."

When once asked to give his views of the subject of life: the future: and rewards and punishments—he gave as his Articles of Belief, the following:

"The object of life is to do something; to develop the world and ourselves, and to develop both in the right direction. Work, man! Be honest. God will deal with you and me as we deserve. That is—He will let us get just what we aim for."

On one occasion a zealous minister approached him with—

"Sir! the Lord sends me here to save men's souls."

"And He sends me here to save their bodies. You attend to your business and I will attend to mine," was the quick reply.

The sermon of the Rev. Charles Foster that morning proved to be one of the most impressive he had ever delivered in Mortonville. On the way home Mr. Morton remarked to his wife that he thought the minister had outdone himself, "I can say 'Amen' to everything he said."



“That is proof of the power of the sermon—that it moved you.”

Her husband smiled as he replied, “No doubt. But I am afraid if we compared views, it would turn out that my amen would be an assent to what he said, and not altogether to what he *meant*.”

“There, don’t qualify. Be good for once, and say he did nobly, and was truly eloquent.”

“Yea and Amen !” answered her husband with such a manner and so much force that he caused his better-half to laugh out-right.

“Do you know,” began Mrs. Morton a little later, “my thoughts made me rather sad as I sat listening to him this morning.”

“*Your* thoughts, possibly, but certainly not *his*. For there was no pathos in the sermon nor its delivery.”

“As you like, Mr. Critic, but I could not keep my mind from dwelling on the changes which time has wrought during the life of the minister—ending by domiciling a Catholic priest in the house that Elder Foster built and lived in so long. There’s pathos—the irony with which Fate answers the prayer of the old Baptist Elder, that ‘As now, so for generations to come, may this house shelter a faithful minister of the Lord.’ The Elder little thought that his son was to be a ‘roving Methodist.’ ”

“Fate ! Providence sounds better. ‘The Lord reigneth !’ ” said her husband.

“I hope you are as serious as you pretend. But I am not sure you are not mocking,” remarked his wife.



“However, I will consider you in earnest, and perhaps that will make you so. Mr. Foster undoubtedly believes the text: but how would he reconcile it with the changes across the Shallow? It is too personal a matter to allow of my asking him. But I will ask you how you would apply the text in the case? Please give your view from the stand-point of the—heathen.”

“With pleasure. Behold now, a remarkable spectacle!—a heathen giving lessons in faith to a Christian skeptic.”

Mrs. Morton gave her husband’s arm a mild jerk, and said:

“I object to the prelude! And what an air of self-confidence you assume! Do you think it befitting a humble member of the Universal Endeavor to Do Something Society?”

“*Humble* member? Who calls me a humble member?” he cried. “In our church we make but little pretensions to humility. Where it is done, it is often a false pretense. We think we have good reasons for a moderate amount of pride.”

“Well, let it be moderate, then. Go on now, if you please.”

“Allow me to disengage my arm, madam, that I may be free to gesticulate as I proceed. Now, then, from the heathen’s stand-point, I should say there was no loss in the substitution of Father Le Grand for Elder Foster. Why? Listen, and I will tell you. A great many years ago, one Sunday, after the elder had delivered a most rabid sermon on the evils of dancing, he



closed his service by giving notice that a hogshead of New England rum had arrived at Squire Damon's store, and would be on tap Monday morning. I declined the elder's invitation to drink, and disregarded his injunction against dancing. I took one of my pupils—you know who—to a ball the next Thursday night. We danced till midnight, and on our way home decided—didn't we, mother—that elder Foster should not perform the ceremony. Father Le Grand is at the head of a temperance organization, but allows dancing. To the heathen, there has nothing occurred across the Shallow, as yet, to shake his faith in the text of to-day. And now, will you take my arm?—we have come to the hill."

"Yes, I will take your arm," she replied, suiting the action to the word. And thus the elderly couple ascended the hill together, like lovers—which indeed they were; for the past had been called up and their thoughts were there.



## II.

April is such a month for playing fast and loose with every undertaking whose success is dependent on fair weather, that Mr. Foster, after consulting with the stewards of the church, decided to postpone until May the series of meetings he contemplated holding.

In the interim, the minister was not idle. He went out several times a week to call on some member of his flock; and, like a general on the eve of battle, urged his leaders to prepare for the coming contest.

He was ready for it. He had prepared himself by prayer and meditation, and he felt that his people should do the same, so he told them.

“Improve the time, my brother,” he would say to one, “during the few weeks that intervene, in getting your own heart aroused, and then you will reach others who are without hope and without God in the world.”

To another it would be, “The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: the few, then, must labor the harder, brother. Pray for strength!” And to still another, “Put on your armor, sister!”

Thus as he met one and another, at home, on the street, or in the mill, he improved the moment given him to sow the seed of preparation, and with such success that his people became at first awakened: and as he continued his labors among them, they roused



into a state of religious fervor which increased as the time of the meetings drew near.

He witnessed this increasing interest with no little satisfaction—absolute joy he never felt at anything.

“I feel that God is with us, Mary,” he remarked to his wife, on returning home after one of these expeditions. “You know that I have never before deliberately started out to inaugurate an old-fashioned revival: but that is what I am now attempting. I have been earnestly praying God to manifest his power here, in a way that He has never done before. I believe He hears me, and is about to answer. My soul already feels strengthened, and rejoices at what I see. I have always loved my work; and lately, as I have been made to feel that the Master calls for greater zeal, and more direct contact with lost souls, my love for the work and for souls has greatly increased; but, Mary, that which my heart most desires, God has not yet granted. You know what I mean. Like David, my soul continually cries out: ‘O, my son! my son!’ Ah, Mary, what though at that great day I can stand before my Maker with the thousands who are to be saved through my labors here, and for every soul a jewel shall be added to my crown, if my son is not there! Oh, think of it, Mary! If Ernest is not saved, can I rejoice?”

“Dear husband, we must be patient, and continue to pray and hope. Ernest is such a loving and dutiful son—obedient in everything but this—that we should be thankful, and trust God for the rest, believing that our prayers for him will not be in vain.”



“You know,” continued her husband, “what a disappointment it was to me that he would not enter the ministry, following the example of his father and grandfather. And now, with sorrow, I notice the absence of any desire on his part to become a Christian and join the church.”

“I am not sure, Charles, that Ernest has made a mistake in choosing to enter business instead of the ministry. He certainly is succeeding famously as manager of the mills, and Mr. Morton says he can retain his position as long as he will, and may in time become an owner. Think of that, Charles. For my part, I am proud of our boy.”

“I am not unmindful of all this. Ernest is receiving a good business education from a very sagacious and thorough business man. So far, it is well. But Mr. Morton is a man of lax religious views : and seeing, as I do, Ernest indifferent to the demands of religion, I tremble for his soul.”

“Indifferent ! I do not think so. He attends church regularly. I know he is not a member, and takes no part, but his life is pure.”

“But he is not a Christian, Mary.”

“I am not sure—comparing him with some men, he doesn’t seem unchristian—to me.”

“Not *unchristian* ! Mary, you surprise me ! There is no neutral or intermediate ground in Christian ethics. Ernest is either a Christian or a sinner—saved or lost. Which do you think ?”

“Are not all men sinners ?” asked Mrs. Foster.



“Even we, who call ourselves saints,—are we without sin?”

“But we repent, we pray, we seek to do God’s will, we accept of Christ, and we separate ourselves from the world,” replied her husband with much earnestness.

“True,” assented his wife, “and Ernest tells me that he tries to do right: that he repents of wrongdoing: that he accepts of Christ, and loves him: and that he prays daily and hourly, in his way, and—I believe him. It would be a great comfort to me if he would unite with the church, but when I urge it upon him, he replies, ‘I am not ready, mother: let me work in my way for the present.’”

“Ah, yes, his way! How many times has this answer of the sinner met my entreaties! Ernest is attracted by the pleasures of the world: he loves sin, and not righteousness. Do you know that he dances?”

“Sometimes—not often,” meekly replied Mrs. Foster.

“And that he smokes?”

“He admits to me that he smokes a little.”

“And this is his way—in the eyes of all the world indulging in sinful pleasures and practices: and in secret striving to reconcile his conscience, and allay his doubts by mock repentance and insincere prayer. What he seems to be to the world, he is—one of its votaries. But his hypocrisy will not deceive God, but only make his own condemnation more sure.”

“Charles, this is anger, and it leads you to do fearful injustice to Ernest, for which God forgive you!



Ernest is not a hypocrite. He makes no false pretenses, but is what he seems to be. But if he were as bad as your wicked words imply, our only hopes of winning him from the error of his ways would be through the exercise of patience : and by displaying to him our love so plainly that he could never be unmindful of its greatness and constancy. Are you anxious for the soul of our son? I charge you, then, to put away all impatience and anger ! *These* will not help you to win him : and if you fail because of these, God will call you to an account for your fatal mistake."

The minister looked with surprise at his wife. She had spoken with great earnestness, and with an authoritative manner never before employed. The mother's love, which he had affronted, had by that affront been led to rise in its might, and to arouse as with an electric spark every faculty of her mind, and array them all in the defense of her son. For the first time in his life the husband was overawed by his wife. He sat in silence for a few moments, then looked at his wife to find her gazing out of the window. He read in her countenance that she had said her final word upon the matter.

What then? Was he to confess that he had been too harsh in his judgment, and to recant? He was not prepared to do that. For he was not sure that he had not been altogether just.

He could not convince himself that his son was not alienated from God : and that his mother, blinded by her love, was not disposed to condone his faults, and trust to time and chance for reformation.



Did she realize that to treat the matter leniently meant to encourage Ernest to procrastinate? And was she awake to the fact that procrastination was perilous to the sinner? Yet he did not for a moment question the noble piety of his wife: he had never known a more perfect saint.

Thus he found himself in a painful dilemma, in which regard for his wife—not to say fear of her—prevented his repeating what he had said, while on the other hand a sense of his duty to his son forbade anything like retraction. In great distress of mind, and without another word, he arose and went to his study.

Mrs. Foster, looking out of the window towards the mills, saw her son come out of the office with a glass in his hand and walk up the street. He was evidently going to “the spring.”

Mortonville like many other places had its famous resorts where the thirst of its citizens could be satisfied. But unlike many of them the beverage dispensed here was costless and harmless. Mortonville had never supported a saloon. The manufacturer would never allow one to get a foothold there. If he sold a piece of land for any purpose, he would always put into the deed a proviso that no intoxicating drink should ever be sold on the premises. The Methodist Elder and the Catholic Bishop had each smiled as he read this extraordinary provision in the deed conveying the land for the church.

Nature had joined hands with the manufacturer in the encouragement of temperance by dotting the mountain side east of the village with reservoirs of clear and



pure water which were never dry, and every house had an abundant supply.

In addition to these a wonderful spring had been discovered at the north end of the village when the canal was built. This spring was remarkable for two things : its great flow, and the change in the temperature of the water from lukewarmness in winter to icy coldness in summer. The spring was just out of the village and was reached by crossing a pretty little foot-bridge that spanned the canal. Comfortable wooden seats surrounded the fountains, and the branches of contiguous elms and birches protected the visitors from the heat of the sun.

April had come in cold, but after the twentieth there was a change and the weather grew warm rapidly. The snow banks disappeared almost like dew before the sun. The mud quickly dried up, and on this day, the last of the month, the heat was midsummer-like.

The young superintendent felt as light-hearted as the birds which were singing in the trees by the side of the canal as he walked up the street. The care of the mills, no easy task, had not yet unduly sobered the hopeful and joyous spirit which he had inherited from his mother. He had been in Mr. Morton's employ for three years, and the year before, at the age of twenty-four, had been promoted to the responsible position he now held.

Fortunate young man ! Not only in the amiable disposition he possessed, which made him many friends, but also in the bright prospects before him. Mr. Morton had become very much attached to him both on account of



his agreeable manner and of his success in managing the mills. Considered from a worldly point of view, Ernest was more successful than his father. Mrs. Foster had brought about the appointment of her husband in Mortonville that she might have her son with them for a few years.

The pride of fond mothers may not always be justifiable, but if the reader had seen this tall youth as he sauntered towards the spring on this warm April afternoon, it is possible that he, or she, would allow that in Mrs. Foster's case it was pardonable.

Something in Ernest Foster's looks always commanded respect, and often admiration.

To the general beholder, he had a strong and noble, but hardly a handsome face. Perhaps a physiognomist would have discerned a beauty in it. Not the kind that is wholly dependent upon the complexion, the color or cast of the eye, or the curve of the lip—that is the kind that is but skin deep; it was a beauty likely to be perennial even though the eye lose much of its brightness, and the cheek much of its color, because its source is that immortal fountain—a pure soul.

Unique in his physiognomy, Ernest Foster was unconventional in his habits. Contrary to the common practice among young men of his age he wore his dark brown hair long, and as it was very thick, and would not easily submit to parting, the wavy and luxuriant mass was combed straight back from his forehead. While the youths of the neighborhood bent their whole energies to start and develop a mustache, he was as closely shaven as a Catholic priest.



He had, however, no priestly look or air. The lines and motions of his lips were on the whole so pleasant to see that is doubtful whether a mustache would have been an ornament to his face.

The lips were thin, and in repose slightly compressed, giving to his mouth a peculiar expression of mingled sadness and severity. But let them be moved by smiles, laughter or speech, and the transformation was as agreeable as it was surprising. His head was square-shaped and rather large. His hazel eyes were dangerous or harmless according to which met their gaze—susceptible maiden, or hard and proud man.

From no one but his mother had he ever received any of the sweets of flattery, and that discreet woman, whose love was as wise as it was deep, tempered her praise with such a healthy admixture of caution that he was not made vain by it.

As Ernest drew near to the spring, he heard singing. It was a woman's voice, and disclosed such power and sweetness as it arose high and clear, or sank into soft cadences, and was so different from any voice he had ever heard in Mortonville, that he stood still to listen, and did not move again until the singer had ceased.

"It must be a prima donna," he said to himself, as he resumed his walk towards the spring.

Emerging from behind the low trees which bordered the path, and looking in the direction of the spring, he saw a girlish figure seated on a bench, with her back towards him, and her hat beside her. A mass of golden



hair hung quite to her waist. He paused a moment to admire the graceful poll, and then stepped upon the foot-bridge. At the sound of his step the stranger arose and turned: and he found himself face to face with—as it seemed to him—the first beautiful woman he had ever seen. He hesitated a moment, then lifted his hat, and started forward. The next step was foreordained to fall upon an unsound plank, which broke with a crash, and threw him upon his face.

A groan from him—for he had sprained his ankle—a stifled cry from her: and she was bending over him—pity, sympathy and beauty personified.

She helped him to arise, to hobble across the bridge, and reach a bench near the spring.

His glass lay in a thousand fragments on the bridge and in the stream. She filled her own and gave him to drink. Was ever such nectar drank by mortal man before? His hand was bleeding from an ugly cut, and she gave him her handkerchief to bind around it.

Then—the excitement over—she stood perplexed near him, as if in doubt whether to go or stay.

Ernest looked up into her face, made a grimace as his ankle twinged, and said,

“I see that when we kneel, we gain your sympathy. Had I been a little quicker to apprehend what was due from me, I should have saved myself some pain.”

“Ah, Monsieur,” she replied, “I am afraid you are seriously hurt. Can you walk?”

“I don’t know. I’ll try,” he answered.

He tried. “Not very well,” said he.



“No? Well, that *is* bad. Let me think how I can help Monsieur. Ah, I know. I will get the crutch that I noticed in the shed, soon after we came here.”

“Came here? Where do you live?” asked Ernest.

“Over there,” was her reply: and she pointed across the Shallow.

“What, my grandfather’s place?” he asked surprised.

“No—my uncle’s.”

“O, to be sure. Father Le Grand is your uncle, then. And so you live there? And you and yours have supplanted me and mine? It is enough. I go—that is, as soon as I can. I am really sorry to trouble you farther, but it seems to have been foreordained that for a season my right ankle is to be a broken reed. I await my grandfather’s crutch.”

“Be patient, and I will return in a few moments,” was her command, and then she left him. She was soon back with a large and heavy crutch that Ernest’s grandfather once had occasion to use for a short time.

“What a dandy walking stick it is, isn’t it?” exclaimed Ernest, as she handed the crutch over to him.

“Don’t break it!” said she, laughing.

“Break it! I should be as likely to break the trestle of the bridge,” he replied.

Ernest found the crutch a little short, but it would answer. He arose and started to leave the spring. The young lady walked in silence by his side. They crossed the foot-bridge and the road, went to the end of the bridge which crossed the Shallow, and then they halted.



“Mademoiselle,” began Ernest (that word was half of his French vocabulary: the only other word he knew was “Oui”), “you have befriended a sort of religious waif. I am such a wayward sort of Protestant that I fear none but the most ‘liberal’ churches of that belief would think me fit to be admitted into membership. I am not certain but Father Le Grand would look upon me as a heretic. And yet I reverence and love that best of all books, which my anxious friends so freely quote against me: and I turn to it now for words to express, better than my own can, my opinion of the service you have done me—‘Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.’ Mademoiselle, you have made the lame to walk. I find myself very greatly in debt to you. What can I do to repay you?”

“Oh, Monsieur!” One white hand went up in a gesture of protestation; then it fell into the other, and both were clasped in front of her. “It was nothing. You owe me nothing. You have too much gratitude for so slight a matter.”

“Slight? Why, see! I can *walk!*” he cried, limping a step or two to emphasize his declaration. “Think! Will you not command me? Can I do nothing for the good turn you have served me?”

A new thought suddenly struck the young lady. She looked up into his face, smiling and asked:

“Is Monsieur rich?”

“Relatively, yes—and no: with only moderate economy I save a part of my salary.”



“O, Monsieur, I pity the needy and the suffering. If I were rich—but would I if I were?—I think I would make some hearts a little happier. I know of two families that are really destitute. I would not have mentioned it but for the thought that came suddenly to me that perhaps the gratitude of Monsieur might be the opportunity of God. A little flour, wood and clothing, now and then, would make these people comfortable. But they are Catholics, and perhaps Monsieur objects?”

“Mademoiselle, I hope you will yet think better of me. Why, I am able to walk only by the grace of a Catholic. The thought of that alone would be enough to prevent the bigotry you were so unkind as to hint at. These poor people shall have the things they need,” said Ernest.

“You are extremely good : they shall be happy, and therefore I shall be glad !” exclaimed the young lady ; and Ernest thought her beauty greatly enhanced by the exultation she seemed to feel.

“You had paid me well before for this proposed charity, but in your last assertion, you offer me a great bonus,” he remarked. “And then, I am doing this for *you*, you know.”

She blushed slightly as she replied : “Say, rather, because it is good to do it.”

“Certainly,” said he, “because one who *is* good prompts me to do good. I wonder who this is that first heals and then reforms me? I should be very glad to know her name.”



“I cannot inform you, Monsieur. The person who has done all that you claim is unknown to me.”

“Well, your own name will do just as well. I trust you will not think me unreasonable in wishing to know with whom I am to enter upon this great missionary work?”

With a *naiveté* that charmed the young man, she said slowly, “Under the circumstances, I think it permissible for me to aid you in introducing yourself.”

“Ah, thank you.” He lifted his hat. “I hasten to present a crippled gentleman by the name of Ernest Foster, to Miss——”

“Agnes Gleauclaude,” added she, helping him out: and both bowed politely.

“And now, Miss Gleauclaude, allow me, as my friend Jim Dobson says, to ‘talk at random’ for a moment. You have elected me to feed the hungry and clothe the poor. That means, I presume, no slight demand on my purse. I am not a millionaire, and who knows but that I may have to deny myself certain indulgences to which I have been accustomed? Think of it! That I should practise the least bit of self-denial seems almost incredible, doesn’t it? Now, in consideration of my giving up something, and for the purpose of encouraging me to steadfastness in this noble work that we jointly take up, won’t you promise to sing for me now and then? I happen to know that you can sing.”

She colored a little as she answered, “You may have heard me at the springs?”

“I did.”

“And you liked it?”



“So much that I would forego many things to hear you sometimes.”

“Would you, really? Well, it pleases me to please others : and so, I promise to sing for you.”

“Ah, do you indeed? I am delighted to hear you say so. And now, when?”

“When? Well, if some day you take it into your head to walk over to your grandfather’s house, and you say to me, ‘I came to hear you sing,’ it will probably be then.”

He lifted his hat, said “I will come,” and limped away.

Ernest was so absorbed in his thoughts all the way to the mill that if he had been put on oath the moment he had reached there, he could not have named one of several well-known people whom he had met and to whom he had smilingly bowed.

“Well ! well ! my boy, what’s this?—a broken leg?” exclaimed Mr. Morton, who was in the office when Ernest entered.

“O, no, sir, not nearly as bad as that. I’m only a little down at the heel,” replied the young man, settling into a chair.

Ernest then related to the manufacturer the circumstances of his mishap—withholding certain incidents connected with it which he considered non-essential.

“Major,” said the mill owner, addressing the book-keeper, “can you and I run the mills for a few days without this young man?”

“I think so, sir,” was the answer.



“You hear what he says,” remarked Mr. Morton to Ernest. “We’ll give you a few days in which to get that ankle straightened out. But mind that you are not too long about it, or the Major and I may get the mills into such a state as to throw you into a relapse when you try to get them in order again.”

Reluctant as Ernest was to lay up for even a day, his ankle had become so painful, and was so badly swollen, that he was forced to accept his employer’s offer. It was nearly a week after when he reappeared at the office to resume his duties. Though still quite lame, he came cheerfully to his post, walking with the aid of a heavy cane, instead of the crutch.

How much a delicate piece of cambric, nicely folded, and bearing the initials “A. G.,” which he carried in the left breast pocket of his coat, had to do with his cheerfulness it would be impossible to tell.



### III.

April weather lasted through the first week of May, and then came a pleasant change, and the revival meetings began.

As Mr. Foster rose the first evening to lay out the work, and to urge his people to constant prayer during the time of the meetings, he faced a full house : and in their accustomed places were most of those faithful few who had upheld the hands of his predecessors on many similar occasions in the years gone by.

The minister closed his opening remarks by requesting the brothers and sisters to “take up the time.”

An old man, with scant white locks falling nearly to his shoulders, and who sat on the front seat, was the first to respond.

It was Uncle Bina Holden. Could anything better be said of any one than what was truly said of him by all who knew him—

“He is a good man.”

He had scarcely missed a meeting of the church since Methodism had started in the village.

“My brethren and sisters,” he began, “I’m tryin’ to serve the Lord, but sometimes its all I can muckle. Pride, and selfishness, and a hankerin’ arter the things of the world hev got a pretty strong holt on me. Pray for me, that I may be more humbler an’ faithfuller.”



After he had given his exhortation, as was his custom, Uncle Bina knelt down and prayed: and although in his prayer he repeated again the familiar expressions—some one or more of which had been in every prayer he had made for thirty years, yet, in such respect and reverence was he held by all present, that nearly every head was bowed as he knelt down: and an unusual quietness preserved until he arose again. Even those somewhat maligned young people of Mortonville, who, not entirely lacking in a sense of humor, could not always keep from smiling as they noted the oddities in speech and manner of some of the Methodist brothers and sisters—the class who were accused of going to the meetings for amusement or scoffing, were decorous and attentive while Uncle Bina prayed.

And as he pleaded with the Lord “for them that is out’n the ark of safety,” there were not many of these young people who did not feel that the reference was to them—as certainly as if their names had been called.

Uncle Bina was not ’umble after the manner of Uriah Heep, but his humility was genuine. No one, not even those who had known him the longest and most intimately, doubted that. It was as unquestioned as his piety. His earthly possessions were not many or large. They consisted of a few rods of land, and a few hives of bees—he was an authority on bees. His “dealings” with others were characterized by the strictest integrity. Indeed he was so anxious to give every purchaser of honey, or “garden truck,” a little more than the exact weigh or measure—for conscience sake—that in a worldly view,



he cheated himself. His whole life—known and read by his neighbors—seemed to belie his prayer-meeting utterances concerning his pride and his “hankerin’ after the things of the world.” And so, strange as it may seem, Uncle Bina became a sort of stumbling block to many of these young men and maidens who frequented the meetings, who were looked upon by the true saints as “without hope and without God in the world.” For if Uncle Bina was yet full of pride, what encouragement was there for them to think that *they* could ever become humble? And if this apparently good old man confessed that, notwithstanding his lifelong practice of giving his coat to the man who had already taken his cloak, he so lusted for the things of the world that he needed the prayers of his brothers and sisters to keep him from yielding to this strong desire, could they expect even a measurable success in attempting to give up the world? The conclusion reached by some of these youth was that Uncle Bina, and possibly, two or three others in Mortonville, including the minister, might be saved: but as for the rest of the people, there was not the slightest hope for them—no more than there was for the heathen.

Prompt to follow Uncle Bina was Brother Styles. Those sitting near the minister imagined they heard him sigh as this individual arose.

Nathan Styles was also a very constant attendant, and regular speaker, at all meetings. He was a very tall, slim man, with a face clean-shaven down to his chin, and under that and running from ear to ear was a thick growth of whiskers, kept closely cropped. He wore a



double-breasted frock coat—a sort of Prince Albert—which he kept buttoned, and when speaking in public, one hand was thrust between the buttons on his breast.

There were a few who believed that Brother Styles looked upon himself as a sort of rival of the minister: not in authority, perhaps, but as a speaker, and a former of public opinion. Nathan was not far from fifty years old at this time, and, so far as is known, no one ever questioned the truth of his frequent assertion that “I am-er in the very prime of life-er.”

How much Nathan was likely to contribute to the success of the revival, may be imagined after reading the opening sentences of his exhortation recorded below.

“Be ye holy-er as I am holy-er saith the Lord-er. Brethren, the Lord-er commands us-er to be holy-er, even as-er He is holy-er. What is it-er to be holy-er? Is it to dance-er? Or to cheat-er? Or to swear-er? No, it is-er to attend Divine service: to-er exhort, and to-er pray. In short-er, it is-er to be holy-er.”

After Brother Styles had closed his remarks, the leader of the singing started a hymn, and all who could, joined in. The singing over, Mr. Foster called on Sister Walcott to “lead in prayer.”

It was an old lady who knelt in answer to the minister’s request, with half a dozen brothers and sisters kneeling down at the same time. How still the house became as she began! And how the sound of her voice, and the words of her prayer, thrilled the heart of the listener, especially if he was a stranger! No one who had heard Sister



Walcott pray could ever forget it. Fortunate that sinner above others, who had such a petitioner at the Mercy Seat, in his behalf! There are some living to-day—separated by many miles of distance and many years of time from the scenes here recorded—in whose memory Sister Walcott, kneeling in prayer as she was that night, remains the most unique, and at the same time the most impressive and revered figure among the many devout men and women it has been their lot to know. And among those who thus hold her in reverential remembrance, one—as he writes these lines—is reminded of his experience when, as a boy of fifteen, he attended his first prayer meeting, and also saw and heard her for the first time; and his mind dwells at length, and with solemn interest on the incidents recalled.

It was the first time he had ever heard a woman speak in a public place. But that was not all: this woman was *kneeling on the floor*—almost at his feet. The first thought that came to him was, “How can she kneel and pray before all the world?” Up to that moment the boy’s pride would have revolted at the thought of his doing such a thing: and had he seen his mother thus engaged—in a public place—he would have blushed with shame. Yet here was a woman, and a mother (for she had a son who was a missionary in a distant land), doing it.

Until then he had looked upon pride as closely allied to courage, if not the same thing: and believed that if one were proud he would be found to be brave also. And he was proud. But when he realized that with all his



pride it would have been impossible for him to do what Sister Walcott was doing, he began to doubt his right to be called brave: and by the time she had closed her prayer he felt that he was a *moral coward*.

Sister Walcott's prayer was not a long one, and it did not need to be. It stirred the hearts of the people as nothing yet had done—as doubtless the minister intended it should. It was immediately followed by two or three prayers from some of the people who were on their knees, and then all resumed their seats.

During the singing which followed—suddenly, like an explosion, and rising above the singing as though it were a whisper, the word “Amen!” rent the air, startling the congregation, and causing a stranger who sat in front of the man who had shouted to spring to his feet as if he had been shot. This was the first intimation that “Dan” Morse was getting “waked up”.

Dan was a blacksmith—and worked in one of Morton's mills. He was called a shouting Methodist, and he was rightly named. The “Amen” was soon followed by a terrific “Bless God!” from Dan; and again the stranger forgot where he was, and sprang up, only to resume his seat and to wait nervously for another cry.

When Dan had got worked up to a certain pitch, he knelt down to pray. His prayer was something terrible for weak nerves to endure. While praying he appeared to be in as much agony as a man burning at the stake, and pleading for mercy from his tormentors. He squirmed and twisted about, and pounded the seat with his clenched fists. The tears fell like rain from his eyes.



His words were yelled rather than spoken, so that he was heard all over the village. Two boys, who sat back of him, were almost as unhappy as Dan seemed to be. For when he turned to pray he faced them. His awful voice, and the contortions of his face, frightened the poor lads exceedingly. He uttered his words rapidly, and threw the saliva from his mouth to such an extent that the clothing of the boys was dotted over with specks of white foam.

If the success of a revival depended upon the noise made and the tears shed, then Dan would make this the most successful one ever known.

When he had resumed his seat, another hymn was sung. Then there was something like a pause, and then, evidently feeling that *his* opportunity had come, a little old man, with a very ugly and wrinkled face, slowly arose. The minister covered his face with his hand and groaned in spirit.

As the little old man—called by the boys of the village, “Old Wrinkles”—arose and began to speak, another man got up, walked out of the room, descended the stairs, and remained outside until the speaker sat down, when he returned to his place.

Not long after, the man who had been out was moved by the Spirit—that is, *some* spirit—to exhort: and as he also arose, “Old Wrinkles” left the room. Not being as sure-footed as the other, he slipped after leaving the upper landing of the stairs, and rolled clear to the bottom, making in the descent a great noise with his boots. He was not, however, badly hurt, as he re-



appeared soon after his antagonist had closed his remarks.

This singular performance of these Christian brethren had been kept up for more than a year. The explanation of it was that each one had learned in some way—it was supposed to be by trading with him—that the other was a hypocrite, and neither one was willing to remain where the other was *pretending* to give the experience of a Christian. Mr. Foster had tolerated this sort of performance as long as he could. It would not do to allow it to continue if he expected the revival to prosper. The next day he notified these devout and amiable brethren that if they could not remain through the meeting it would be much better not to go at all. And so, rather than have their pure souls poisoned by each other's venom, they both kept away from future meetings.

The moment "Old Wrinkles" had got back into place, and his heavy boots had ceased their racket, the minister rose, and invited, and urged, all those who desired to be prayed for to come forward to the "Anxious Seat": and he pointed to the front seat—in line with and at the left of Uncle Bina.

"I beseech you, my young friends, to come! Come, and find salvation!" he said. And then, after directing the leader to sing, he left the platform and went among those he had invited to persuade them to go forward. He made his way slowly from one to another, whispering a few words of warning or entreaty in the ear of each. He was not altogether unsuccessful—two or three arose



slowly, and with their handkerchiefs to their eyes, went forward. He came at length to the storekeeper's pretty daughter—Jennie Wheeler.

“Ah, Jennie,” he exclaimed, “won't you come? Don't you want to be saved?”

Her cheeks were soon wet with tears, and her handkerchief went to her eyes. She replied brokenly :

“I do want to be saved, but I can't make up my mind to take this step to-night. I want to think it over.”

“I have thought it over for you, Jennie,” he replied. “Don't delay, you may not live for a second invitation. Come, Jennie, while you may.”

“I mean to do right,” she said, “but I must think it over. I am not quite ready.”

“Not ready, Jennie! Is it the ball next week that you think of? Cannot you give up dancing for the sake of your Saviour?”

“I *would* give it up if I thought He wished it. I don't think it's the ball, but I—I'm not quite ready to take the step you ask me.”

And so he left her, and repeated his effort with another.

After the minister had left her Jennie thought over her answer, and concluded that after all, the ball had something to do with her refusal to comply with his request, more than she really thought when she answered as she did. The fact was that she was preparing a new dress for that same ball, and she was expecting to look prettier than ever in it. And did she think that if she



went forward for prayers there would be no occasion to use that new dress? She knew that whether she thought of it or not, for she knew very well that dancing was looked upon by Mr. Foster and all the Methodist church members as almost an unpardonable sin. But was it really so bad? She asked herself that question as she continued her reflections. She knew it would be entirely inconsistent for a Methodist to dance, that is, for a church member. But there *were* church members who danced—Episcopalians, all, almost, and some Congregationalists. Could the Methodists then be the *only* truly Christian people in the world?

Another thing she thought of, if dancing were so very bad, why did Ernest Foster do it? Why did his father allow him to do it? At this point, it is greatly to be feared, she forgot nearly everything else in thinking how handsome the minister's son looked at the last ball when she danced with him, and wondering whether he would attend the next one, and whether he would admire her new dress.

Different readers will be likely to make widely different judgments concerning Jennie based upon this glimpse of her thoughts at a trying moment. Some will condemn her, and believe that Christ did so then and there. Some again will think her not so very bad, and confidently hope that God's plan of salvation will be found to be broad enough to take in not only the Rev. Charles Foster, who knew he was doing right, but pretty Jennie Wheeler, who, although she had many doubts about her being perfect, after seeing herself in the mirror



the minister held up to her, would not own that she was, as Mr. Foster declared, the enemy of her Saviour.

When no more could be persuaded to go forward, Mr. Foster knelt down and prayed long and earnestly for those who were on the anxious seat. As his prayer increased in fervency, Dan Morse began his shouting: and all those who were inclined to be emotional or demonstrative, relieved their feelings by weeping or groaning. Thus by one and another adding a little, the whole congregation was at length wrought up to a state of considerable excitement. Even Nathan Styles, who was perhaps as hard to move through his tender emotions as any one there, was heard to say quite plainly: "Praise God-er!"

Before closing the meeting the minister felt called upon to solemnly warn young men and maidens against the evils of dancing in general, and of the coming ball in particular.

"Ah, my young friends!" he exclaimed; "you will lie awake nights, thinking of the ball next week; but not a moment's anxiety will you have for your soul. And you, my young sisters, if your sole thought is to see how by adding a ribbon here, and a piece of lace there, you can make that ball dress so much prettier than the last—well, you may succeed and do it—you may be even the belle of the ball.

"But let me tell you—let me *warn* you, my dear young sister, that if that is the only dress you have on when you come to stand before the Great Judge, you



will blush with shame, and fear shall seize hold of you when He pronounces it 'filthy rags.'

"And but for that awful fear and sinking of the heart, you would be filled with envy as you see Sister Walcott standing there dressed in a magnificent white robe of righteousness, and with a crown upon her head!"

Having succeeded pretty well in giving the young people something in addition to the "ball dress" to think of and keep them awake that night, Mr. Foster closed the meeting.



#### IV.

The revival was now the main theme of discussion in the village. Its defenders and defamers met in argument on the street, in the store and in the mill.

The opponents of the religious movement attacked Dan Morse, but got little satisfaction from him. He contented himself by replying, "The devil is a great critic;" or, "Read John, 7th chapter, part of 17th verse: 'If any man will *do* His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.' Try that, brother, and see, after you have had experience, what you think of revivals." Dan would then hammer away at his anvil, or work away at his lathe. To those who continued to pester him, he would either make no reply at all, or he would now and then look up from his work and say, "Try the antidote for critics found in John, 7th : 17th."

Dan was of the opinion that a person who always wanted to argue on matters of Christian duty, was more anxious to get rid of his obligations than to obtain light as to what was justly demanded of him.

This was not the view of David Hoffman—the leader of a small body of Adventists that Mortonville contained. Hoffman ridiculed this idea of Dan's, saying,



“If a man won’t argue, that’s all I want to know about him.”

The Adventist leader was a man not far from sixty-five. He never shaved, and rarely trimmed his beard, and the result was a full and very long growth. He aimed in this to imitate the old patriarchs, as in other matters—for instance, food and dress—he was governed, as he claimed, by the Scriptures.

The meetings of the Adventists were characterized by hair-splitting discussions, in which there were some remarkable interpretations of Bible declarations. Hoffman was really a materialist—claiming that the soul was not immortal : and drawing, in an ingenious way, evidence from the Bible (conclusive to himself) to prove it. He had been for years a very diligent student of that book.

Few of those he met could quote as much of the Bible as he could : and few in the village could successfully meet him in a religious argument. One or two of Mr. Foster’s predecessors had attempted to overthrow him, but met with such poor success as to lose prestige from the trial.

Dan Morse refused to “waste time” with him. Hoffman got the hardest knocks when he engaged in a word battle with Jim Dobson. Jim was an earnest Methodist brother, but a very nervous man : and Hoffman was his “bête noir.” The cold criticisms of the Adventists would at times so irritate Jim that he would turn on the old man, and attack him with such vehemence, and throw at him such an array of facts, assertions, bits of



ridicule, and Scripture quotations, that the really able disputant would be disconcerted, and now and then routed.

The morning after the first revival meeting, Hoffman, having an hour to spare, left the mixing room where he worked, and went up to visit Dobson, who labored in a room by himself, under the office, where he prepared some of the supplies of the mill.

"Didn't see you at the meeting last night," said Hoffman, sitting down on a box.

"No, that ere last boy of ourn's gittin' his grinders, and I had to stay t' home 'n help the woman. You went, I s'pose?"

"Yes, I was there."

"How'd they start off?"

"O—pretty fair—pretty fair—that's all you could say," answered Hoffman.

"Of course," remarked Jim, "they didn't start jest right in *your* opinion. We Methodists couldn't start *jest* right, you bein' jedge. But what was out'r kilter?"

"Now, hold up, Jim. I haven't said anything out the way, have I?"

"No, but you want to. Come, spit it out—what was t' pay? Don't you like revivals?—en don't you want men saved?"

"Revivals? Yes, I do believe in them : and I do want men saved—that's just what I want. Save *men*, and not talk about their *souls*. Souls? There are no such things separate from bodies. '*Man* was made a living soul : thus saith the Lord.' "



“O, I see! Man hain’t got no soul. He’s all body—flesh. You *know* ’t you hain’t got none, don’t you?”

“Certainly, I am not two creatures: God made me but one,” replied Hoffman.

“Must be then ’t you’re a mummy. I allers thought there was suthin’ lackin’ in your case, but I never dreamed it was so much.”

“Well, have it as you like, Jim, but what I am all men are.”

“No, sir, not ’t all,” cried Jim. “If you had a soul, you’d *feel* it! You’d *know* it! We that hev got ’em do.”

“You don’t talk sense, Jim.”

“Your kind, you mean—Advent, material sense. I hain’t tryin’ to talk that kind.”

“I don’t expect you to listen to reason, but if you would, I could give you some arguments going to prove the *oneness* of man that would surprise you.”

“Git ’em out’n the Bible as usual?” asked Dobson.

“Yes, entirely. But now, mind you, I don’t mean as interpreted by your kind of commentaries, but I mean, take the ‘Thus saith the Lord’ unadulterated. I don’t propose to take *anybody’s* interpretation.”

“Well, Hoffman, I wanten t’ see that done. You are ter prove by passages from the Bible that man haint got no soul only the body?”

“I think I can,” said Hoffman with a confident air.

“Let’s understand,” said Jim, appearing to become very much interested in the coming demonstration—  
“you won’t allow any commentator or explainer around



—neither Scott, Clark, Barnes, nor nobody? You want simply the ‘Thus saith the Lord?’ Hain’t I right?”

“You are right,” assented Hoffman.

“Well, then, go ahead and demonstrate,” exclaimed Dobson, after taking from a drawer a Bible printed in the original languages, and handing it to the Advent leader. “Next to the tables o’ stone, I reckon that is the nearest to the very ‘Thus saith the Lord.’”

“This is a trick, Jim!—a mere trick!—and not fair at all,” cried Hoffman.

“Not fair? Why, it’s jest what you wanted. You don’t mean ter say you want one printed in *English*, do ye?” answered Jim.

“Of course I want one I can read,” said Hoffman.

“O, you *do* want one that’s *interpreted*, do ye? So you’re stuck in the fust on’t! And you can’t make that one out? Well, I thought ez much. You never knew that ‘Thus saith the Lord’ was in the book till some one told you so—interpreted it for ye! And that haint all! You wouldn’t know the fust passage nor word in the Bible, if some uv them commentators hadn’t knowed a good deal mor’n you do! *Demon-strate*! My idee is that that Demon o’ yourn ’ll git you into mor’n one *strait*, if you don’t become more humble, and less bumptious.”

Just at that moment, Ernest Foster came into the room, and Hoffman, seeing that there would be no more opportunity to make any reply to Jim, arose and went out.



When the door was closed, Ernest, seeing that Dobson was a little nervous, said to him :

“What’s up, Jim? You seem a little shaky.”

“Do I? Well, I guess I be. Fact on’t is, Hoffman gits me all out o’ jint. But I gin him a pill, I reckon.”

“Argumentative—was he?”

“I should say he was. Allers is, if he speaks at all. Why, if Hoffman fell into the Shallow and was drowned, I should go upstream to look for his body.”

“Take my advice, Jim—let Hoffman alone. It only irritates you to dispute with him, and if at any time you seem to get the better of him, you have not won him over. He comes up again as combative as ever. I’m afraid it unfits you for your best work.”

Jim looked upon the words of the superintendent as a reprimand, and he was overwhelmed with mortification. He turned pale, dropped his hands to his sides, and asked :

“Hain’t I allers done my work well?”

“You misunderstand me,” Ernest made haste to reply. “I did not mean your work for the mill. That is perfectly satisfactory. You know we consider you one of our very best men. But I referred to other work which for a long time I have noticed you and Dan Morse were doing. It is this—showing men how, in the midst of cares, trials and perplexity, and with little of this world’s treasure, one who has what he calls the ‘Love of God’ in his heart, can be cheerful, kind, helpful, and as true as steel to his sense of duty. This has been your best work, Jim; and I want to assure you



that it bears fruit in a good influence on all of us outsiders."

Tears were in Jim's eyes as he looked at the superintendent and said: "You don't mean ter say that poor, ig'rant creeters like me and Dan can influence you much, do ye?"

"You are not ignorant in some things, Jim. God has supplied you with wisdom that learning could not give you. Let Hoffman do his own hair-splitting, and let your upright, buoyant Christian *life* be your only argument, and you will win him and all of us to your way of thinking, if we are to be won at all."

"I hain't sure but your eggvice is sound: it's wuth tryin' anyhow," replied Jim.

For a long time after the superintendent had left him, Dobson stood at his bench cutting up skins for roll covers, and, reflecting, suddenly he broke out as follows:

"Jim Dobson, stop! Them thoughts and feelin's savors too much of pride and vanity. Can't you stand jest a little praise—you doughhead! Why, you once git it inter yer head that you'll ever be any great punkins, and you're *gone*! Humility is fust class to tie to just now. Don't set out to be a great man. I wouldn't do much diffe'nt than you allers did, on'y I'd stop arg'eing with Hoffman. I dunno but the Super's done more harm than good by talking so to a soft pate like you. But if it on'y encourages ye ter try ter do suthin' really worthy to be done—that is



*in your line*, why then it may not spile ye. But now, I tell ye, ye look out !”

Jim was at the meeting that night, and not only his pastor, but all who had the interest of the revival at heart, were glad to see him. He was a great help. His exhortations and prayers were always to the point : and he was a good bass singer, though troubled sometimes to get the words right, as he was a poor reader.

Jim had a listener to his remarks that he was not aware of. It was Ernest Foster, who was passing the lower hall door when Jim arose to speak ; and being interested in the opening sentences, he quietly entered the hall and sat down. The door at the top of the stairs was open, so that Jim could be plainly heard.

Mr. Foster had chosen as a sort of text to guide the brothers and sisters, these words :—“ My son, give me thine heart,” and Jim was speaking as follows :

“ I’ve been a settin’ here and thinkin’ over these words of Scriptor, and I can’t git away from the idee that back of them is a Father yearnin’ and yearnin’ for our love, and He can’t take ‘no’ for an answer. I s’pose He sees suthin’ in us that our neighbors don’t see. Somehow, brothers and sisters, these words move me powerful to-night. I happen to think that I’m a father, and know something what a father’s love is, and how much he wants his children to love him back again. I’ve tried to guess what *His* love might be by thinkin’ of my own—and I allowed that if mine was ez one drop from a garden sprinkler, His was



like the line storm: or if mine was like the heat of a match, His was like the whole month of August.

“And now, if yo’ll bear with me jest a minit, I’ll tell you how great a *common* father’s love is. For they hain’t no commoner—and I might as well admit it—ig’ranter one in Mortonville than him who is now speakin’.

“I overhearn some one say one day that see my little Jimmie playin’ out door, that he wan’t no better lookin’ than his father. That meant that he was humbly, an’ very much so. Well, now I declare to you, I was su’prised. For to me he was as han’some as a picter. The same one said he had freckles, and the reddest hair ever seen. And *that* was news ter me. I was that blind to the outs about him that I had overlooked the freckles, and I thought his face was fair and uncommon winnin’ like, and as to his hair, I could hev sworn that it was what is called golden, for ye see, it was dearer than gold ter me.

“And mebbe I haint so blind arterall. Mebbe they’s a good reason why love makes me see funder and deeper, and find more in Jimmie than other folks does.

“For it kinder strikes me it’ll be better for him, and if it hain’t done so yet, will afore long make him love me amost as much ez I do him. If he don’t do that I shall have on my heart *about* ez big a load ez I can carry.

“Well, sech is man’s love for his child’n. And I hain’t no doubt—not a mite, my brothers and sisters,



that God's love to'rds His child'n is as much greater as He is greater than man. And whoever says that God *don't feel it* when we refuse to give Him our hearts—I tell ye *that* man's talkin' at random !”

“Well put, gentle, sweet soul !—and true as I believe. God must have inspired you, Jim,” thought Ernest, “and for fear I shall hear some one not thus inspired, I will now depart,” and he stole out as quietly as he came in.

After leaving the vestry, Ernest went slowly, and as he pretended to believe, aimlessly up the street. He had started out from the house simply for a walk—that was all. And yet, somehow, he felt quite sure that he should go as far as the bridge that spanned the Shallow. As to crossing it when he arrived there—well, he might, and he might not. It was some distance away, and he certainly could not cross it until he reached it.

“What is the use,” he mused, “of bothering about the bridge until I come to it?”

Here he took a cigar out of his pocket, and as he lighted it, reflected that he had never smoked by daylight, and presumed his father would say—if he knew it—that he had “chosen the night because his deed was evil.” He could not deny that his father's view would, in a sense, be true. The habit of smoking was not in its incipient stage with him. He consumed two or three cigars a week, always in the evening.

He had never smoked in his father's presence ; not because he felt the habit was positively wrong, but because he knew that his father did. The practice wa



growing upon him, but he had never cared to be seen indulging it.

His cigar lighted, he resumed his walk and enjoyed his smoke. How beautiful the night with its soft and balmy air ! And how at peace with all the world he felt, as, leaning on his stout stick, he sauntered along. He had already forgotten the prayer-meeting.

The music—so familiar to him at night—of the water rushing over the dam a half mile north of the village, reached his ears, and now in the light of the early moon he could see the water glistening on dam and in river.

A novice smokes slowly, and but half of Ernest's cigar had been turned into smoke and ashes at the moment he stepped upon the bridge.

Leaning against the railing he complacently went on with the task of burning the remaining half, while the noise of the dam mingled in his ears with the gentle murmur of the Shallow gliding slowly by beneath him. While thus engaged, he noticed many long shadows—of trees and other objects, that stretched westward from the eastern bank of the river—some of them reaching the bluff, and even touching the house on the bluff.

Others fell a little short, and others still, a little more. Then he distinguished his own; and it was the shortest of them all. After contemplating these shadows for a few moments, he threw away the stump of his cigar, saying, “ Well, mine has the advantage over the others—it can move. We will see if it cannot come up to them.”

So saying, he started across the bridge, and did not halt until he had forced that limping image of himself



to stand with its head resting upon the roof of his grandfather's house—nor even then, for when he had gone so far, he went a few steps farther and rang the door-bell. The bell was an innovation—a knocker had been used in his grandfather's day.

Father Le Grand came to the door.

“Ah! Mr. Foster, come in,” said the priest, cordially; and he ushered Ernest into his library, which was entered from the lower end of the hall. As Ernest followed the priest he passed an open door on his right, and glancing through it he saw a very pretty room, well-lighted and having a cheerful and alluring aspect. He caught a glimpse of some paintings, and noticed an open piano. By the time he had taken possession of the chair offered him in the library, he had arrived at the conclusion that his grandfather's house had an uncommonly pleasant interior.

“I see you are yet somewhat lame,” said Father Le Grand, taking from the table a long stemmed pipe which he had lain down at the sound of the door-bell, and resumed his smoking. “I was away when Agnes came for the crutch, or I should have myself gone to your assistance.”

Ernest could not feel that the priest's absence on that memorable occasion was in any sense a misfortune.

“I can assure you,” he said, “that although practiced in the art of relieving the suffering as you are, it is doubtful if you could have acted the part of the good Samaritan more successfully than Miss Gleauclaude did on that day.”



“As to *acting* any good part, I might equal or surpass my niece, but in being a true friend in need—priest as I am—I own that I can learn of her.”

“Is Miss Gleauclaude at home?” asked Ernest, feeling that he might as well disclose without further delay, the object of his call, although he had no doubt that the priest understood it.

“She is at home, but just where, I cannot say. Do you wish to see her?”

“Yes, if I may,” replied Ernest.

“Make yourself comfortable in the parlor,” said Father Le Grand, pointing to the room into which Ernest had glanced on coming down the hall, “and I will look for her in the grove where perchance she may be enjoying the moonlight.”

Accepting the priest's invitation, Ernest crossed the hall and seated himself in the parlor. He found the room all that he had expected from the glimpse he got when he passed it before. A large lamp stood on the piano and threw a pleasant light around the room. Two or three oil paintings and as many steel engravings, all worth looking at, hung about the room, and he wondered if the priest's niece painted. He ventured to guess that she did, and that he was looking at some of her work. Having looked about him briefly, he was ready to believe that not another house in Mortonville, without warning to the inmates, would present such an air of readiness to receive callers. He was sure that he had not been expected. So far since he came into the house, he felt none but pleasant emotions.



But now, suddenly, the prayer meeting came up before him, and he thought of his father there, earnestly pleading with sinners to repent and turn to God. A train of thoughts then passed through his mind, which, perhaps should have come several days earlier. Where was he? and what was he doing?

He remembered well his father's sorrow at his repugnance to entering the ministry, and now he looked upon his views and life in general. Was this new acquaintanceship upon which he was entering, which had already begun, with Father Le Grand and his niece, to help to complete his estrangement from his father? He had for some time felt that his father took a too dark and pessimistic view of life, but was he prepared to place himself on a friendly footing with the priest? If he did, what would the result be? Would not his father denounce and perhaps disown him?

Strange, perplexing and discouraging fact, that these two men of God, laboring for the same Master and to the same end, had so little in common that to follow one was to antagonize the other.

And was that the fact? Was it impossible for him to maintain a dutiful and cordial relation with his father, and still meet Father Le Grand in a friendly way? In his short acquaintance with the priest he had found him to be a cultured and agreeable gentleman. He knew him to be a man of good works, a strenuous and eloquent advocate of temperance, while he manifested a large charity in dealing with the indiscretions of youth and the weaknesses of human nature.



As Ernest compared the two men, he wondered if his solemn manner, his cheerless disposition, and his disapproval of most of the common pleasures of the young, were a sure indication that his father was a better, a more righteous man than the genial priest. At this point he was awakened from his reverie by the noise of a swinging door. The sound of a light step quickly followed. Then the faint shadow of a woman flitted by him on the wall, and lifting his eyes he met those of the priest's niece as she reached the doorway.

As he rose to meet her and reply to her greeting, the first impression she had made had grown stronger. Her beauty seemed to him greater even than at their first encounter. In her presence his misgivings left him, and the voices within, which had until that moment been more or less loud in their remonstrance, became silent. "Beautiful and good." This was his decision although he stood but at the threshold of their acquaintance.

That conclusion reached, what ground was left for any doubt as to the propriety or prudence of his visit to the priest's house? None. He no longer asked himself whence present events were drifting him. He never indulged in gloomy thoughts when there was any excuse to be rid of them, and what an excuse was here. Time would tell how well he would bear up under disappointment and suffering, if it ever became his lot to endure them. But he was not in the habit of anticipating coming ills. On the contrary, he was always looking out for pleasant things; seized upon them at sight, and



made the most of them. And if he had stopped to think, which he did not, could he have called up a pleasanter hour than he was now spending? Doubtful. She sang for him as she had promised, and although he knew not one note of music, and could only judge of it by its effect upon himself, he felt as he listened that here was a being far more richly endowed with that Divine gift so powerful to move the heart than any one it had been his lot to know. And his senses, his soul, responded in appreciation and delight as never before.

It was while Miss Gleauclaude's fingers moved deftly along the keys of the piano, and while she sang, he knew not what, that the knowledge came like a revelation to him that he was passionately fond of music.

And when she ceased and turned to him, saying :

"Is that enough? I am afraid I have sung too long," he replied:

"Enough for you, yes, but never enough for me. Ah, Miss Gleauclaude, you have made a mistake to-night unless you intend to sing for me again at another time."

Her only reply was, "Do you sing, Mr. Foster?"

"Not a note."

"Indeed ! you are as bad as my uncle then."

"Is he very bad?"

"Yes, very, in music. But then he is a priest, and therefore again, very good."

"Oh, I see ; and as I am not a priest, I suppose you think the badness in my case has no offset of good."

Miss Gleauclaude smiled as she replied, "How can



you suppose that? Did I not compare you to a good man?"

"Well, let us see," said Ernest, his face assuming the expression of a scientific reasoner, while he emphasized his words by bringing the point of his right fore finger down upon that of the left, "let us analyze what you did say. Now then, you remarked, that as I could not sing, I was as bad as—"

"As a good man," put in Miss Gleauclaude.

"And *he* was very bad," continued Ernest.

"But very good," said the young lady.

"I stand corrected, Miss Gleauclaude. You are right. You really paid me a very high compliment. I am not sure that you meant to do it, but you did it all the same. Now if I should take this all in earnest, and stupidly imagine that you saw some good in me, or expected something more of me than is demanded of common mortals, I dare say that you would make haste to—to set me right, wouldn't you?"

As he said this and leaned back in his chair and allowed his hands to drop upon the arms of it, there was nothing in his looks or manner that indicated an undercurrent of serious thought. On the contrary, a smile was on his lips as he waited for her reply, that peculiar smile which once seen, was not immediately forgotten.

Ernest had guessed right, Miss Gleauclaude was an artist. Was it the artist who noticed with pleasurable surprise that the young man sitting near her, when he smiled as now, had an exceedingly attractive face? And



in its effect, did that smile suggest to her the finishing touch of some great painter, who, by the stroke of a brush, so changes the image upon his canvas, that, from being only interesting it becomes fascinating? Perhaps so. But it was the woman whose pulses quickened the next moment, whose senses thrilled under an influence never felt before, and who discovered all at once that wisdom demanded that she act upon the defensive in her intercourse with this young gentleman. For—and was it not a weighty reason?—was he not a Protestant heretic?

Ernest at length broke the silence. “Is it because the question is difficult to answer that you take so long?” he asked.

“Pardon me if I failed to comprehend it,” she replied. “Will you be kind enough to repeat it?”

“O, certainly. It’s no trouble, and I am quite anxious for an answer.” And he repeated his question.

“And what if I meant it?” said she.

“Did you?”

“If I did not, you must think me a trifler. Perhaps I had in mind your benevolence. Charity, you know, is a noble virtue.”

“True, but I haven’t paid the first installment yet.”

“But you will. You have promised, and you are a man of your word. Hence it is as good as done.”

“I have a mind to take you in earnest,” he said, speaking slowly and as if he meant it. “And if I do so,” he continued, “I shall consider myself henceforth as, in a certain sense, on trial or probation—a test of moral



uprightness to which I assent, before one who doubtless has some standard, and a high one, of right living, by which I shall be judged. Perhaps I ought to confess that I have already been measured by other criterions, and I suppose, found wanting. But somehow my censors have failed to reform me. I am still given over to a sort of perverse light-heartedness. I wickedly persist in being happy, and in thinking the world a delightful place and full of beautiful beings and objects.

“But I yet do sometimes yearn for more light in order that I may correct my shortcomings—my sins, whatever they may be. But when you tell me, as you have, that you have a little faith in me, why, I am led to feel that in spite of my wicked happiness, and my frivolity, my case is not altogether hopeless. Many things prompt me to appeal from those who have so often and constantly condemned me, to one who has not sat on the case.

“For one thing, I wish to know if a ‘full bench’ will confirm the judgment of a part: again I wish to know whether those who take the law from the same book interpret it alike: again, I am desirous of obtaining the view of the new Court, of a former decision, ‘that to be joyful is to be sinful, but the despondent are righteous.’ In short, I want more light. I am not a cynic, Miss Gleauclaude; I am not aware that I am irreligious. To be sure, I am *told* that I am: but *am* I? I do not mean to be: and no one could be more anxious to change his course than I shall be when I am once convinced that I ought to: and if the judgment of the other court is reaffirmed, I shall doubtless be so



convinced. In answer to all of which, what says the Court?"

"This Court," replied Miss Gleauclaude, quietly, "doubts its jurisdiction in the case: and this person cannot understand how one could seriously make such a proposition as this to almost a total stranger. If meant to be taken only in fun, let it pass. But excuse me if your suggestion put such serious thoughts into my mind that I could not appreciate the honor."

"May it please the Court," began Ernest, and Miss Gleauclaude, casting a furtive glance at his face, saw that wonderful smile again: and her eyes dropped, "*I admit* the jurisdiction of the Court. So much is settled. As for the rest, I was never more serious in my life. To be sure, Miss Gleauclaude, I have not known you long. But a short acquaintance has convinced me that you are good, and that you desire others—all, to be so. You *will* form an opinion of me—you *will* judge me, whether I ask it or not. Having as I do, a great respect for your good opinion, the thought that you will watch me—that I shall be on probation before you—will inspire me to do good, and refrain from evil. Do you believe me?—Or will you persist in thinking that this is another attempt at being funny?"

"O, yes,—I believe you," said the young lady with something like a sigh, "but—what am I to do with you?"

"Isn't there a trap door in the floor here somewhere, with a secret spring? Inveigle me on to it—press the spring, and presto, you are rid of me," said Ernest.

Miss Gleauclaude laughingly remarked that after all he was not destitute of humor.



“But,” she continued, and she put on a very solemn expression, “there is no trap door. There is only a trap, and I have myself fallen into that. For, having *said* you were good, you would now force me to *make* you so.”

“A concise and masterly opinion from the Court,” cried Ernest. “I infer that your honor looks with favor upon my proposition—shall I say, assents to it?”

“No, I must decline to enter into such an extraordinary arrangement as you have suggested. You will agree with me when you have thought the matter over. But do not let this answer mislead you. If you think I do not care whether you go right or wrong, you are mistaken. I do care. I would much prefer to have you live a noble—a Christian life than a sinful one. If you wish it I will pray for you. Think of me as doing it, if that will help you, Monsieur.” (Ernest felt that she used this word again for the purpose of impressing on his mind that they were yet strangers to each other.) “If we ever become well acquainted, there would be no impropriety in a comparison of views: and perhaps mutual benefit would be the result.”

“You very politely,” said he, “give me ‘leave to withdraw,’ as the Great and General Court says to unwelcome petitioners. Very well, I shall not deny that your decision is probably both justifiable and wise. However, I am neither sorry that I asked what I did, nor mortified at your refusal to grant it. I have no intention of becoming desperate, and growing worse than



I am. I even think of doing better, aided as I shall be by your prayer.

“And, Mademoiselle, you have encouraged me to hope that we shall some day reach such a stage of mutual confidence that we shall talk freely together upon the great theme of life, telling to each other frankly our true thoughts—our deepest and most solemn thoughts regarding it.”

Saying which, Ernest at once arose and took his leave.



## V.

When Ernest reached home he found his father and mother in the sitting-room awaiting him. A glance at their faces, and he was convinced that he had been the subject of their conversation, and was without doubt still the object of their thoughts. Perhaps he felt some compunction which helped him not only to guess what their thoughts probably were, but to reason out what they must necessarily be.

He took a seat, and, at a loss for anything to say, waited in expectancy.

After a few moments, during which no one spoke, his father said, "You are later than usual, Ernest."

"Yes, a little : but yet, not very late, father. It is not quite ten."

"Something detained you at the mill ? Some break down ?"

"O, no sir. I haven't been to the mill since tea."

"Nothing important kept you away from the prayer meeting ?"

"Well, I suppose I *could* have postponed the business, and attended the meeting."

"If you will listen to me, Ernest, I would like to talk with you a few moments upon a matter that is of the greatest, the most vital importance, to—you. A mat-



ter about which I am constantly anxious—will you hear me ?”

“Did I ever refuse to listen to you, father ?”

“No : but you have not taken heed to what I have said.”

“If I have not always obeyed your injunctions to the letter, father, possibly in a certain sense I have come nearer to obedience than you are aware of.”

“Ernest, when will your eyes be opened ?—your conscience be convicted of sin ? You still persist by false reasoning in making yourself better than you are.”

“Father, what you say troubles me exceedingly. Not because I fear that it may be true of me—for in my heart I cannot think so : but it pains me beyond expression to think that so far from being any comfort to you, I cause you constant anxiety and sorrow.”

“You have no fears for *yourself*, then ?” replied his father. “You have no doubt that the sinful life you are living will end well. You are in the main, happy now : and you look into the future, and towards eternity with complacency. But one thing mars your happiness. You are anxious—not about yourself—not in the least : but you are troubled for your father—to think that he will take it so much to heart : that he is so peculiarly constituted that he spends nights without sleep, and days in prayer, all because of a needless solicitude for his son, whom he—for some unaccountable reason—considers a lost sinner. Is not that a correct description of your feelings, Ernest ?”

“No, it is an exaggeration. And now it seems to me



the time has come when we should understand each other better, or rather when you should understand me better. I am now a man, and although your son, I must say frankly that I will not be driven nor frightened into taking any step which my reason does not commend nor my conscience demand—not even if you command me to do it. I know you will think me unfilial and perverse : and even something much worse. I cannot help it : and it will be but a continuation of the misjudgment which I have suffered at your hands for years.

“ I will not deny that your views of what my Christian duty is, may be correct : although never once have you aimed to convince me of it by any fair and candid argument—by talking with me as one reasonable man talks to another. You have assumed too much in regard to me ; you have never questioned me that you might learn what my conceptions of duty, my hopes and purposes were. You have condemned me without hearing me. Until this moment I have never refused to listen to you. I have listened, although you denied me the right of reply, saying that I only wanted to put off the day of repentance—that I only desired to procrastinate and gain a little longer allowance of time for sinful pleasure. Father, such has been your manner of approaching me that you labored in vain to touch a responsive chord in my heart : and if this heart of mine has not been hardened by the contact, it is because God has been more merciful to me than you have been. If it be your purpose now, or at any future time, to talk to me as you



have often done, I tell you it will be useless, or worse than useless."

"Ernest, do you realize what you have said?—that you are forbidding your own father to put forth any effort to save you? You are, as you intimate, your own man: and if you decline to listen to reason, I cannot compel you—I can only pray for you: but will God hear me in behalf of such a froward son?" said the minister; and in anguish of mind he leaned forward and buried his face in his hands.

"You still misunderstand me," continued Ernest. "I am not aware that I ever declined to listen to reason. I do not now decline. When you come to me in the spirit of the words 'Come, let us reason together,' I shall be glad to meet you half way."

"Do you mean," replied Mr. Foster in a severe tone, "that you will consent to hear me on the question of your need of Christ only when I come to you and ask that we may enter into an endless discussion *pro* and *con*? Have you ceased to vacillate only to settle down to the infidel's tactics of first requiring proof of the inspiration of the Scriptures, the existence and the need of Christ: and then brushing aside all the evidence submitted, as contrary to reason and unworthy of acceptance of free thinking and intelligent minds?"

"I will answer you by asking if you think I am an infidel?" replied Ernest.

"I confess with sorrow, Ernest, that I do not know where you stand."



“Forgive me if I do you injustice, but it seems to me that you have now admitted that you are *blindly* impugning the motives of your son.”

“Would God!” exclaimed the minister, “that my fears for you were altogether groundless. But your life—your life! How can it be else than hateful in the sight of God?”

“And yet it is a happy one, father. I have found so much in life that was pleasant, that I have sometimes thought that God had given me a disposition, or capacity, to enjoy more than the average of mankind: and I have been grateful to Him for it. For it seemed to me that in addition to the other manifold blessings He had bestowed upon me, He had placed me under special obligation to love Him, by this gift which enables me to find life more endurable than many do. And you think He hates me? With all the contrary so plainly before me, I cannot—I will not believe it.”

“Ernest, I beseech you. I warn you, not to encourage yourself by this false hope,” cried his father, rising and beginning to walk the floor.

“I must answer as I feel,” said Ernest, also rising, “and if in what I say I seem to show filial disrespect, I do not mean it. I do not question the sincerity with which you utter this solemn warning. But against what are you *unconsciously* warning me? I will tell you. Against trusting that emotion of my heart I call love to God, which I have ever felt since I first began to read His word and His works intelligently: and against that faith which is in me that He loves me. If



I speak the truth, then you, a father and a minister of the Gospel, have made the astounding attempt to stifle—to destroy that love and that faith of your son : and God in mercy to me—and to you as well, has decreed that your misguided efforts shall fail.”

Mr. Foster sank into his chair before Ernest closed, and did not reply to the latter's earnest words.

After standing in silence for a moment, Ernest uttered a “good night”—for both his parents, then affectionately kissed his mother, and retired to his room.

Soon after the minister arose, and saying, “Don't wait for me, Mary,” and went to his study and shut himself in.

Mr. Foster was a man who usually had the last word himself. He could have recalled—had he cared to think it over—but two instances when he had not. One was in a discussion with his wife about his son, and the other in the talk he had just had with his son. How he happened to fail in the first instance has been sufficiently explained. There were good reasons for it. So now there were the best of reasons why he became silent, and did not reply to Ernest's final words.

While his son had—as it seemed to him—made the most extraordinary claim ever put forth by an unregenerate sinner, and had followed it with an accusation as inexplicable as it was monstrous, he had spoken with such earnestness and apparent sincerity as to leave no doubt that he *believed* what he had said.

It was the sincerity of his son, and the increasing tenacity with which he clung to the hope he had



expressed that had finally silenced the minister. Never in all his ministry had he met with one so deluded by a misconception of God's will and promises as Ernest was. It was a peculiar and perplexing case, and he was not quite prepared to go on with it. He desired to spend some time in prayer and meditation before laboring farther with his son. And although the hour was late, he would not close his eyes in sleep until he had satisfied that desire.

The moment he had shut himself into his study he knelt in prayer, offering a long and silent petition from the very depths of his heart for his son, and for wisdom and guidance that he might bring that erring son to Christ.

It was past midnight when he arose from his knees and sat down to think. He said to himself in the outset of his deliberations that if he failed of being the instrument of bringing Ernest to a reconciliation with God, then his ministry would have been almost in vain, and would hardly justify itself. What! was Ernest to be lost when his father and grandfather had aimed to be true servants and ministers of God?

Ernest had been under their teaching, had been a witness of their life, and must have inherited something of their natures. If Ernest was lost, what could he, his father, answer, when the Great Judge confronted him with that fact at that great and terrible day? Could he vindicate himself? No, he could not. He *must* then prevail with his son and win him to Christ. Then came the question, how could he reach



him? Could he do more than he had done? In the same direction—no. Should he repeat then his efforts with Ernest? That was forbidden—Ernest would not listen to him; had he not said so?

In this exigency—with some misgivings, and a feeling that he was about to suffer indignity and authority—he settled upon a plan to follow in his future labors with his son. It was a plan somewhat at variance with the course he had been pursuing, but it was the only one that suggested itself to his mind which afforded any encouragement of success. And when he had decided to adopt it, he retired to rest.



## VI.

The second morning after his call at Father Le Grand's, as Ernest entered the office, Major Copeland, the book-keeper, handed him an envelope, with the remark :

“One of Beaubien's boys left this note for you this morning. Looks like a woman's writing—I should say.”

Ernest took the letter, glanced at the writing on the envelope and quietly said, as he went to his desk :

“I shall know in a moment, Major, and—”

“And will tell me,” added the Major.

“I was about to say—and—you may—guess—if you can,” replied Ernest, at the same time reading the note.

“Mrs. Beaubien writes an elegant hand, if it is”—began the book-keeper, when Ernest interrupted him with—

“Please keep quiet, Major ; this is an important communication.”

“Ah ! is it indeed ?” cried the Major, “I am all attention. Read a little louder, please.”

“Is Beaubien in debt,” asked Ernest, after he had read the note.

“Yes,” answered the book-keeper.

“Well, give him an order on the store for ten dol-



lars, and—charge it to me,” said Ernest, arising and leaving the office.

“Whew!—and charge it to *him*!” exclaimed the Major, after the superintendent had disappeared. All right, but strange—very.”

Had any one observed the superintendent particularly that morning as he visited the various departments of the mills, that person would have noticed that he was uncommonly cheerful. Perhaps it was the charitable act with which he had begun the day that made him so. Certainly his conscience must have commended his benevolence: and the approbation of conscience is essential to happiness.

It was, however, something in addition to a satisfied conscience that accounted for his buoyancy of spirits that morning. And when, in a remote corner of the mill, he covertly took from his pocket the delicate note, and reread it slowly, his manner, his looks, and every expression of his connected with the act, showed plainly enough that the exquisite missive was of itself a pleasure.

And now, he had already proved, as he thought, the truth of the saying, “That it is better to give than to receive.” He found it so at any rate. And with the enthusiasm of a new convert, he longed for other and continued demands upon his charity. There is little doubt that he would have exhausted his income, had occasion required. It could scarcely be claimed that moral consideration alone prompted this readiness to give.



It is even to be feared that to the circumstances attending the act, more than to the act itself, Ernest owed the pleasure he experienced in his benevolence. He had had some doubts that Miss Gleauclaude really intended to hold him to his promise. But here was her note—or draft, rather, as it pleased him to consider it. And he had honored it, and was ready for the next.

What an unexpected and agreeable copartnership he had entered into! Who would—or could—refuse to give of his substance to aid the poor, when the direction and manner of his donations were designated by a partner so young and so beautiful?

Possibly some would look upon this alms-giving as disinterested. Perhaps others would even term it mercenary. For Ernest, although he had admitted that he had been paid, still expected a return for it. Miss Gleauclaude would sing for him; she would thank him, and her beautiful eyes, as she related in detail the incidents that followed the reception of his gifts, would express her appreciation of his deed. And all this would pay him a thousand-fold.

And yet, there is another view of the young man's act, thought and motives which, in justice to him, should be considered. The Beubiens were very needy, and there were many in the family. The store order would help them greatly. That order came from Ernest; and whoever or whatever prompted it, *he* gave it, and gave it—even if secondarily—to help the Beubiens. So much, at least, must be placed to his credit.

And then, there had been, ever since his second meet-



ing with Agnes Gleauclaude, a sort of moral purpose—such as it was—underlying every important act of his. He believed her to be as good as she was beautiful. And as he persisted in thinking himself on probation before her, he found himself often deliberating as to what course to pursue in matters having a moral bearing, that came up to be acted upon. And he always decided upon that course which he believed would commend itself to her; and which, as he felt, must therefore be right. For by intuition—or some other instantaneous process, if there is any other—he had, on a very brief acquaintance, formed the highest opinion of her judgment as to what was pure and noble.

If owing to favorable conditions, he found it easy and pleasant to do good, was he not simply more fortunate than the majority of mankind?—and was he not to be congratulated rather than criticised?

Had Mr. Foster learned that Ernest looked to a *Catholic* for moral inspiration, he would have been filled with dismay. And Ernest's grandfather—what would he have thought? He would have felt that his grandson was doomed—lost beyond all hope of recovery.

But no troublesome thought came to Ernest as he stood with her letter in his hand. To him, Agnes Gleauclaude was one of those beautiful women described in romances, or seen in dreams, but rarely met in real life. And he ascribed to her a strength of character not always found in conjunction with flaxen hair and blue eyes.

And the more he thought of the fact that she was a



foreigner, and a Catholic, the more interesting she became to him. She spoke and wrote his native tongue almost as well as her own. Some slight peculiarities in pronunciation or accent, and the use of a wrong word now and then, only added to the charm of her speech. He knew but little—by personal knowledge—of what is termed “society,” and had so rarely come in contact with any of that highly favored class—young ladies of culture—that it is not surprising that he looked upon Miss Gleauclaude’s accomplishments as quite remarkable.

And as to her religion? He cared as little for the dogmas of the Catholic church as for those of other churches. He believed there had been, and were now, as noble men and women—as great saints—in that as in any church. In one thing he felt quite sure that the policy of the Catholic church was wiser than that of some Protestant churches—and especially the Methodist; which really he knew more than any other. And that was the policy of sanctioning harmless amusements, like, for instance, dancing and card playing—two practices condemned as sins by Methodist church members. It seemed to him that his father and all who believed with him, overlooked the fact that God had himself given to mankind their desires for pleasure and entertainment. Were these desires evil propensities to be conquered? Doubtless his father thought so. For he was constantly speaking of them as the longing of the “natural heart,” which was “at enmity with God.” Ernest contrasted these views with the practice of the



Catholic church, which instead of forbidding innocent pleasure, simply aimed at keeping the participants within wholesome limits ; and he thought the Catholic idea much more reasonable than the other.

For Sister Walcott he felt the deepest respect, even veneration. But, somehow, as good as she was, he had never felt inclined to accept the invitation she sometimes urged upon the young people at meetings to “ walk with us in the straight and narrow way,” for he was positive that Sister Walcott’s straight and narrow way led by nothing more cheering to the young than prayer meetings, self-denials, clouds and tears. He would not deny that Sister Walcott was a saint. He believed she was. But, if the majority of the people he knew were like her, and held her rigid opinions, and lived her ascetic life, he presumed he should get into a condition of mind something like her own when she declared—as she occasionally did—“ that she was ready to depart.”

Was Saint Agnes about to accomplish what Sister Walcott had been unable to do ? If so, was it because of her youth and beauty ?—and did these make the “ way ” in which she led seem less straight and narrow ? These questions furnish food for reflection. They hint at a possible transfer of a certain responsibility from old friends of Ernest to a new one. And if the sequel should show that the graces of person and mind with which the Creator had endowed the niece of the priest, were such that she was the only being in the world for whom this young man would change his life and his



faith—how great was her responsibility, and how great also that of her religious advisers ! If she realized that responsibility, and her religious nature were as deep, and her force of character as great, as Ernest apprehended, would she be content until she had won this Protestant heretic over to the true faith ?

How many of the possibilities or probabilities that loomed in Ernest's pathway would develop into facts, and how many prove as unreal as a mirage, time alone would tell. As to one contingency, it would decide that very soon—indeed, it was as good as decided already.

Rev. Charles Foster, look well to your son ! Has no one—no bird, nor angel, warned you of his danger, as you would call it ? No,—nor will. For no one knows it. And what could you do, if warned ? Nothing. He would not listen to you. He feels that you never took him into your confidence, and you are the last person in the world whom he would take into his. But this painful fact need not have been asserted, for he is not aware that there is anything to confide to any one. Life, always pleasant, shall be pleasanter than ever to-day to him. But he does not ask himself why ?—and will it be the same to-morrow—in a week—in a year ? He simply gives himself up to a dream all day long—a pleasant dream in which he realizes nothing. If the question—“ She may go and not return—what then ? ” should thrust itself into his consciousness, it is possible there might be an awakening, and he would be forced to see the result towards which influences irresistible and sweet were hurrying him.



But no question of such a startling nature aroused him from his delightful and purposeless dream, and caused him to take notice of his whereabouts. Possibly he was a witness to the truth of the saying—"There are none so blind as those who will not see."

If in thought, he crossed the Shallow a hundred times before the sun went down—which he certainly did ; and in imagination pictured to himself the priest's niece—now seated at the piano, or working at her easel, or sketching beneath the tall maples, or strolling on the hillside near the house, where the fragrant arbutus came early and in abundance—and dwelt with increasing interest and admiration on each and every image of her that memory and imagination could bring before him—if, in short, that day and during the days to come, his thoughts were oftener and longer on her side of the Shallow than on his—his blindness must be of the willful kind, or he could scarcely fail to see that a certain finality was not simply inevitable, and near at hand, but that it had already come : and that he was held fast in the meshes of Love.

Too late for warning—quite too late, Rev. Charles Foster. Indeed it would be difficult to tell just when it should have been done. For there is reason to believe that something in the breast of your son—was it his heart?—as he went down before the blue eyes of "Saint Agnes" that April afternoon, uttered to itself those very words—"Too late for warning."



## VII.

It is Monday afternoon of the third week in May. The revival has now been in progress two weeks.

The reader is invited to look in upon Mr. Foster for a few moments as he sits in his study—that favorite rallying ground, where he has so many times planned the course to be followed, and put on “the whole armor” preparatory to engaging in moral warfare. Here, as the reader remembers, the revival was decided upon, and here the minister is now debating how long it shall be continued. It has not been a failure—not by any means—for ten persons have come forward for prayers, and are every night relating their experience at the meetings.

Ten souls saved ! Is that a little thing ? If *one* soul had been saved, which otherwise would have been lost, let no one say that the revival had been a failure. “ Oh, no, not a failure,” remarks the Universalist reader. “ We don’t say that, because doubtless the morals of the new converts were raised. But revivals are not instrumental to salvation, for all men are to be saved, regardless of such efforts.”

“ Only ten saved ?” asks some other liberal Christian reader. “ All the others then who would not assent to the tenets of this exclusive and bigoted church, were



lost. Think of that ! The probability is that this clergyman was refusing admission to scores of good Christians."

Of course, to readers of such "liberal" views the revival at Mortonville would seem inconsequential. But to Mr. Foster with *his* belief, how vast and incalculable the good which was to follow from it.

And yet he did not appear to be enjoying the fruit of his self-denying and earnest Christian labor. He looked pale, worried—almost disheartened.

He had never been a happy man. Was he never to be ? Had his Master destined him to be, like himself, "A man of sorrows" only ?

He was not satisfied with what he had accomplished, although it was much. But he was nearly worn out. He felt that he was on the verge of nervous prostration, yet could he have the heart to stop now when so many—so very many of the young people in Mortonville were still indifferent—traveling down the broad road to destruction ?

He called to mind a remark made by a brother clergyman from an adjoining town, whom he had met at conference, that he attributed the lack of spirituality among the people of Mortonville and all over the town, to their fondness for dancing—which sinful amusement, he had been informed, was indulged in to an alarming degree. And he was less inclined now to question the brother's remark than he was at the time.

There had been a ball since the meetings began—the one he had warned the young people against. Another



was in preparation—or what was the same thing, or worse, a Catholic picnic was to take place the coming Saturday, and to be held in the maple grove that surrounded Father Le Grand's house. These Catholic entertainments were occasions of such pleasure to the young people, and all were made so welcome that he knew many of those he looked upon as his people would be there. And these things were so distracting, and so wicked at such a time as this!

Perhaps some reader again interrupts to exclaim—“Poor man: how austere! how absurd! These were simply young people's meetings: and at least the *young* must have seasons of pleasure—of gayety.”

What! must have times of gayety?—absolute gayety? How such a declaration would have sounded in the ears of Mr. Foster! He had searched very carefully the Bible through to find any evidence that the Saviour of mankind ever smiled, and he had found none. The Old Testament foretold that he was to be a man of sorrows, and finally to be slain upon the cruel tree. The New Testament recorded the fulfilment of that prophecy. When he considered why the Son of man had thus suffered, and that notwithstanding what he had endured, probably half to two-thirds of all mankind would be lost, it made him shudder to hear the word “gayety” mentioned. And as to young people's meetings—those for prayer and conference were the only kind he thought proper or necessary.

Never at any time inclined to look with favor upon the sports of the young, the minister had lately shown



a tendency to condemn every act of both old and young that was not of a positively religious character.

He felt that there never was a time when the work which these protracted meetings were calculated to do, was more needed in Mortonville than now. But there must be a head; and he, the head, was limited in his powers of endurance. After long and earnest thought, he decided to bring the number of meetings down to two a week.

Having settled that matter as he felt obliged to settle it, owing to the weakness of the flesh, he turned his thoughts to another of equal, or greater importance; one which was of more personal nature, and which had a more vital interest to him at this time than anything else. If the conversion of sinners was important, the conversion and salvation of his own son was the most pressing necessity at hand.

The revival meetings were not reaching Ernest—he had attended none of them. “But somehow, something *must* reach him,” he exclaimed almost in desperation, rising and beginning to pace the floor. Once more he considered the plan he had formed that night after his talk with Ernest, and which when examined the following day, seemed to carry with it such risk to himself, that he had hesitated to put it into practice.

“God help me, and show me how to save my son!” he cried, as he continued to walk back and forth, without lifting his eyes from the carpet. Suddenly, and without knowing why, he paused in front of a picture hanging on the wall, and raising his eyes, looked at it



for a long time. It was a portrait of a lovely little girl—his only daughter—who had died in her tenth year. So many years had passed since her death, that he had almost forgotten he once had a little girl. But he remembers now—and for some reason, how vividly he recalls her sickness, her death, and all the harrowing circumstances attending them !

He stands before the picture until he is weary, and then draws up a chair and seats himself where he can continue to gaze upon it. Yes, he remembers now. Her disease was diphtheria. He remembers how he loved her, and how her last intelligible words, in which she told him that she was to die, pierced his soul.

Again he feels the agony of that last hour when he had stood beside her bed and witnessed the convulsions that marked the last stages of the disease. Again, broken-hearted, he kneels beside her body, straightened and rigid, as death had left it.

And the weeks and months that followed—how terrible the loneliness and desolation. He recalls it all. He does not forget what he said to his wife after they had buried their idol—and he had spoken as he felt—that if he could bring back their little girl by becoming a slave, or by having his eyes put out, or his hands cut off—if it would be as well for the child, how gladly would he submit to these physical misfortunes to take the pain from his heart.

But what does this mean ?—The minister suddenly throws himself upon the floor, and covering his face with his hands, leans over upon his chair. A groan es-



capas him, and tears follow—the first in many years. Was his love so great that after a lapse of twenty-two years his heart was again overwhelmed with grief at the inrushing of so many sad memories, associated with his loss? This does not altogether nor mainly account for the paroxysm which had seized him.

True he had, as not before in years, just lavished the most tender and affectionate thoughts upon the sweet child who had been taken from him. But it was the sudden perception of the startling fact that he did not know how dear she was to him until she was dead, and the thoughts which followed this discovery, that overcame him. He had never told her, nor shown it to her—unless his manifestation of grief at her dying bed told it as plainly as words could have done. How earnestly he hoped she had understood him at the last. For he did love her—Oh, how much!

In this remorseful review of the past, there was associated in his mind with the image of his daughter, that of a chubby, fair-haired baby boy. There could be no thought of her that did not take him in—this little brother. For he was a perpetual delight to his sister, and she would deny herself everything for him. She died when little “Erney” was scarcely two years old. Among the many and touching incidents with which memory now crowds the melting heart of the father, one, especially moves him. The little brother had on one occasion, raised his hand to strike his sister. There was a brief and gentle remonstrance from her—a word and a look—and the magic power of the sister’s love ap-



pealing to him to spare, subdued his young anger, and brought him in tears into her arms.

The minister arose. His face was stained with tears, but the hopelessness of an hour before had gone from it. He stood again before the portrait.

“Though dead, you still speak to me,” he said. “God through you—His angel—has shown me how to deal with your brother. It was your way, has been your mother’s way, and shall be mine. Love shall win him. I was partly decided before, but I did not know that I possessed this love for him which I now feel. Now I know—now I feel it. I do not think of risks now—God will take care of that. He shows me my love to my son, and demands that it be as unthoughtful of self as yours was—I thank Him that Ernest lives, and that I may yet show him what his father’s love is.” He clasps his hands and looks pleadingly at the picture, is silent a moment, and then cries out to it :

“O, May ! my angel child ! Come to us often ! Forgive your poor blind father : and lead us—you can see so much better than we—lead us—mother, brother and father, home to God.’”

As the time drew near when Ernest would come from the mills, his feelings were like those of a father who awaits the arrival of a long-lost son. And had not his son been lost?—and was he not now found? Impatient to see Ernest as never before in his life, though but a few hours since he parted from him, the minister watched for his coming. At length he is rewarded. “He is coming,” he cries, at sight of him.



“Ah, my boy! you will find me changed! I will be patient with you! you shall be won! you shall be saved! For love—your father’s love envelops you, and love is resistless!”

Love resistless? Are you sure, reverend sir, that you know what you are saying?—and is it true? For if it is, it will be interesting to see how well you will be able to solve the difficult problem of turning back the current of your son’s affections, which, impelled by this same “resistless” force, is directed towards one who holds religious tenets that you have heretofore contemplated with holy horror.



## VIII.

The Catholics had decided to hold a picnic on Saturday, as soon as they learned that the mills would be stopped on that day for repairs on the canal. A better place for it could scarcely be imagined than the maple grove which, surrounding the priest's dwelling, ran westward for some distance on a gentle rise and then abruptly ascended the mountain side. The foliage of the great trees afforded abundant protection from the sun. It was a romantic, roomy and grand retreat. A place that on a pleasant summer day was inviting to those of all ages and dispositions. Everyone could be accommodated here. Fifty pairs of lovers would find little trouble in discovering as many secluded spots where they could murmur their sweet hyperboles, and bestow their expressive glances unheard and unseen by their cold and matter-of-fact elders, or that still more trying part of humanity—the children. Here and there a huge rock with rectangular sides, and a surface large and level enough to afford comfortable room for a lunch party of a dozen or more, lifted its ponderous and weighty mass—five, ten, and even twenty feet in the air. From the branches of some of the tallest trees a swing could be put up with a drop of forty feet. There was something in the slow and long sweeping



vibrations of this colossal pendulum—a sort of “sweetness long drawn out”—so fascinating to the children, that the grounds around the swing were the first to be occupied and the last to be deserted on any picnic day.

It would almost seem as if Nature had designed the place for pleasure parties, so well had she supplied it with things that contribute to enjoyment. Where the steep declivity of the mountain met the more gentle slope of the grove, a brook plunged into a deep ravine, forming a very pretty cascade, and thence went on a sinuous course to the Shallow.

The sylvan nook surrounding this cascade was a spot of exceptional beauty. The lover of the picturesque would find his chief delight of a day's outing in this noble forest in sitting on one of the banks of this ravine and watching the white sheet of water as it plunged down the precipice, and in listening to its roar.

For more than thirty years the people of Mortonville had assembled in “Elder Foster's grove” on every fair Fourth of July to honor the day and to picnic. The children would meet in the morning at the church, and under the leadership of the Sabbath-School superintendent, and preceded—in early days, by a fife and drum, and later by Mortonville's brass band—march to the ground. Immediately after arriving, an hour or two would be spent in speech-making: a few salutes were then fired, and after that the people gave themselves up to such pleasures as suited them. Whether this custom was to be changed now that the grove had changed hands, remained to be seen.



For several evenings preceding the day of the picnic, the young men of the Catholic Society had been at work constructing something with a large amount of timber and boards which they had borrowed from the mill owner. And when the sun of that much longed-for Saturday arose clear, ushering in a perfect day, its first rays fell upon a structure standing in the ancient grove that would have overcome the late Elder Foster with consternation had he been alive. It was a broad and substantial platform for dancing.

If in many things the Catholics were to amuse themselves in a different manner than their Protestant predecessors had done, they were not to depart entirely from former rules and customs. Father Le Grand was a well-known temperance reformer, and this picnic, like all that had gone before it, was to be a strictly temperance gathering. That being the case, how could they have done better than engage Lem Baker for "lemonade man," as the children called him, who had for a quarter of a century mixed the regulation drinks for Protestants at their annual celebrations on this ground? And Lem had agreed to attend to the "marter."

When some one wishing to joke with him a little about the matter asked him if he didn't think the Catholics would want a "stick" in their lemonade, he replied :

"No mor'n the other folkses, I gess. They's a good many, I reckon, outer all sexes uv religion that *ef* the truth was known, like it a *leetle* better 'ith the stick.



But them folkses, like you and me, make their'n to hum."

As early as nine o'clock Saturday morning, one immense swing and several small ones were in operation. Many children were already on the ground, and the older people were beginning to arrive rapidly. Some vehicles were approaching the grove. Among them was an express wagon loaded with lemons, ice, tubs, pails, and drinking utensils. Back of this trudged Lem Baker, bearing a familiar wooden stick, having a large knob on the end of it. This suggestive article, which in length was about the same as a ball club, and but little, if any lighter, he carried over his shoulder.

No sooner had the wagon of lemonade in embryo arrived at Lem's "old stand," than a troop of children surrounded it and began to cry :

"Lem ! gimme some lem'nade ! M'sier B'ker ! give me some le-mon-ade ! O, M'sier Lem ! moi give some dat — wat you call him ! le-mon-water, don't it ?"

"Ge-et eout !—clear—out the way ! will ye ? I shan't git this here drink ready for an hour yit !" yelled Lem, swinging his baton around over the heads of the youngsters, at which they all fled back to their swings.

The day bid fair to be an unusually warm one for May, and Lem would be likely to discover a great demand for the beverage he was to prepare, and which was always supplied free of charge.

At lunch time, which was at twelve o'clock, the demand began, and Lem had two barrels full from which



he filled the pitchers and glasses as fast as they were presented, and that was very fast.

“A good healthy drink—almost as good as water,” said Father Le Grand, presenting a glass to be filled.

“Wa’al now ’tis, Mister Grand. It’s a good innercent mixer, and don’t hurt nobody,” replied Lem.

Here the priest sipped from his glass, and remarked :

“I guess you have fairly earned your reputation, Baker. I don’t know how this could be improved.”

“Much obliged,” said Lem, smiling, “I haint practised twenty-five years and not learnt nothing about making ’ade, I gess.”

“May you never dispense anything stronger, Lem,” exclaimed the priest, taking up his tumbler and walking away.

“Second the motion !” responded Lem with vigor—and then to himself, added the following amendment : “That is, ter de public ; but in my back room, I shall probably dispense—but I allers called that lem’nade.”

The young men and maidens manifested a much increased interest in affairs, when between two and three o’clock a half a dozen musicians mounted the platform and took possession of seats reserved for them. Some fifteen or twenty minutes—always a very trying time to lovers of harmony—were spent in getting their instruments in tune, and then the leader shouted out to the multitude, “Choose your partners for a quadrille.”

What is there in that call, and in the first strains of the violin which precede the dance, that set wild the hearts of the young countrymen and maidens ? The



sons and daughters of farmers, mill hands, clerks in stores—all young people who have ever danced, and many who never have, thrill in every limb and muscle, and experience a sensation of exhilaration and delight at the inviting sound of the violin.

Perhaps it is true that dancing is the most fascinating of pleasures to young people the world over. Certainly it was the case in this Northern New England locality where the things here related took place. They had their “sociables,” “parties,” “picnics,” “old folks’ concerts,” “sleigh rides,” in which they felt more or less interest, but these were comparatively dull affairs unless there was an opportunity given them to engage in their “ruling passion.” The dance or ball, pure and simple, alone appeared to its devotees as an event of the first magnitude among the things to be enjoyed. Notwithstanding the fact that this favorite pastime was under the ban of all the “evangelical” churches of the region round about, the sons and daughters of orthodox members of these churches persisted in indulging in it. And before this day was to close—and almost on the spot from whence, many years before, Elder Foster, in a talk to the Sabbath-School children picnicking in the grove, warned the youth against this evil, saying that those who engaged in it were “dancing to their eternal doom,”—scores would participate in this condemned diversion, their light hearts and smiling faces telling how far they were from thinking that “their steps took hold on Hell.”



There had been a prompt response to the call of the leader of the music. Half a dozen sets could easily move upon the large floor, and as fast as one figure was over and the platform vacated, new sets would form. It was a little past three o'clock when the height of interest and enjoyment was reached.

Father Le Grand and his niece had withdrawn from the crowd a short distance to the top of a cliff, where they could look down upon the people and around the grove. They sat upon afghans spread upon the ground. The priest was smoking a cigar, and observing the company, with a look of complacency upon his face. Now and then he called his niece's attention to some incident that amused him, or otherwise, or to some person whom he wished her to notice. A book lay open in Miss Gleauclaude's lap, from which now and then she appeared to read a little. In her hands she held some sort of fancy work, to which she occasionally added a loop or stitch.

She was looking at her book, when her uncle said :

"Agnes, your eyes are better than mine : tell me who those two gentlemen are who have just stopped at Lem's table."

The young lady raised her eyes from her book, and looked at the two newcomers, which she had no sooner done, than she exclaimed in great surprise :

"Why—would you believe it?—They are Mr. Foster and his son."

"Can it be possible?" replied the priest, adjusting his glasses, and taking a new and sharp look, "What can



it mean, Agnes?—why these people of ours are the very sons of Belial to such as he—I mean the older one.” After a moment’s pause, the priest continued, “I can’t imagine what should bring him here unless it is a feeling that he is called upon to protest, in the name of his ancestors and his church, against these, to him, sacrilegious revelries. We will wait for this mystery to unfold itself.”

“And that is the kind of hospitality you are to show, Uncle!—a spirit that makes your niece blush for shame of you?”

“Ah! the young man lifts his hat and bows in a very polite and friendly way—shall I go down, Agnes?”

“Shouldn’t you?” asked his niece, at the same moment meeting the eyes of Ernest Foster, and setting the young man’s heart in a flutter by the nod and smile she gave him.

“Well, child, come then, and we will go down and meet the enemy,” said the priest, rising.

“O, I must go too—must I?”

“Of course. I want you to draw the fire of the dangerous elder party. I think I can manage the younger one,” replied her uncle jocosely.

Mr. Foster and Ernest were walking slowly in the direction of the cliff when Father Le Grand and his niece met them.

Agnes admired her uncle almost as deeply as she loved him. And on this occasion she felt prouder than ever of him as she witnessed the tact and grace with which he received the visitors, and assured them—and



especially the Methodist clergyman—that he felt greatly honored and pleased by this friendly act of theirs.

The manifestations of cordiality on the part of the priest were altogether sincere. If he had not the best of reasons for thinking the Rev. Charles Foster came in a friendly spirit, the wish that such might be the case, was father to the thought. But knowing as he did of the uncompromising stand Mr. Foster had taken against certain amusements and practices, he could not help wondering if anything had occurred to induce his visitor to modify the views he had so firmly held, and if so, whether he looked upon what was taking place within sight and sound, with any degree of approval. The priest was likely to obtain all the light wanted on the matter before his Protestant brother left him. Mr. Foster was a man who never “beat about the bush,” and very soon after the four had exchanged civilities, he said to the priest:

“Father Le Grand, my main reason for coming here—or at least one of the chief reasons for coming—was a desire to have a talk with you upon several matters. Are you willing to give me half an hour or so of your time—in some quiet place?”

“I will do so with great pleasure,” replied the priest.

“Thank you,” said Mr. Foster, bowing. And then turning to Ernest he observed, “I would be glad to be alone with Father Le Grand for a little while.” He hesitated a moment, and then continued, while a melancholy sort of a smile played about his lips, “My son, if you are tempted to indulge in this”—and he partly



turned towards the platform to designate what he referred to—"to-day, would you be willing to deny yourself for my sake, and out of respect for my views desist—at least, until I am gone?"

"The request was hardly necessary, father—I should not have danced to-day," answered Ernest, somewhat embarrassed by his father's making his request so publicly.

Nothing could have happened to cause more surprise than the presence of the Methodist clergyman at the Catholic picnic. And when he and the priest, talking solemnly together, walked slowly away from the crowd that they might not be overheard, curiosity was at its height, and the people gathered in groups to ask one another what this conference of the ministers could mean.

As soon as Mr. Foster and the priest were out of hearing, Ernest turned to Miss Gleauclaude and said :

"My father leaves me to the mercy of a cold world, and at the same time enjoins me not to indulge in certain of its pleasures. That I may get as far away from temptation as possible, I have a notion to visit the cascade. What do you say to going with me?"

"But I'm not tempted by this close proximity to the stage, as I never dance," replied the young lady.

"Ah,—indeed !—well, then of course you don't care to remain. Shall I have the honor as well as pleasure of showing you some of the objects of interest in this forest, once the domain of my ancestors?"

"Do you think I have lived here all these weeks,



and not found out anything about this beautiful place? While the arbutus lasted I was here every day," said she.

"Oh, as to flowers and such things," he answered, "I presume you have noticed more than I have. But the cataract—the grotto, the bear's den, have you seen all of these?"

"The cataract is something much prettier—a cascade: which I have seen, but I never tire of it. The others I should much like to see," she remarked.

"You shall!" he cried. "Follow me."

As he walked by her side, still using the heavy stick as an aid, his ankle not having become strong, the world seemed a paradise to Ernest Foster. The expectation that he should find a certain person there had made the Catholic picnic worth attending. But for that expectation he would never have come. And—strange thing—his father, on learning that he was coming, determined to accompany him. What could have led his father to come, he could not imagine, but he had to thank him for unwittingly giving him the opportunity of having Miss Gleauclaude entirely to himself for a while.

He took the young lady first to the bear's den—or as many people believed it to be, the catamount den, and he was delighted to find that he had shown her something new and interesting to her: and still more delighted when as she entered with him a little way into the opening of the cave—though she persisted in going—she timidly shrank toward him, and tightened her hold upon his arm. Ah, was he ever likely to forget



that moment when he came so very near to putting his arm around her—but didn't quite dare to do it?

What Ernest had been pleased to call the grotto, altogether captivated his companion. She declared that she should often come there to read or sketch.

"What!" said Ernest, "you wouldn't come out into these wilds alone, would you?"

"But haven't I often, in search of flowers?"

"Not so far as this, I reckon. Be brave, but not too brave, Miss Gleauclaude. If I learn that you come here alone, I shall be sorry that I showed you these secret attractions."

"Is this very far?" she asked.

"Yes, farther than you are aware of. We are a long distance northwest of the cascade," said he.

"We are much farther off than I supposed, and we must hurry back."

"Yes, back to the cascade," said he.

"Shall we stop here?" asked Ernest, when they had reached a bank of the ravine from which the falls could be plainly seen, but not so near that the roar of the water would make conversation difficult.

"As you like," she replied, "you know you are the guest."

"Am I?" answered he, throwing himself upon the ground in front of her, when she was seated, "Am I? What if I should say that I am on my native heath, and that returning to it for the first time after a long absence, I find a stranger here who has supplanted me?" and he looked into her face,



“I should answer that I did not understand whom you meant to reproach—your ancestors for bartering away their birth-right, or my uncle for trespassing. But see how beautiful the sunlight is, as it steals through the trees and lights up that shady glen!” she exclaimed.

“Yes, it is very beautiful—the sunlight that falls on your land but not on mine. This substantial enclosure—to wit—rocks, hills and dales—woods, caves and water-falls—all are yours, and fairly so. I don’t dispute your title, you know. But please bear in mind,” and he looked at his listener in a way that made her laugh, “please bear in mind that being in direct line of descent from—my grandfather, they might have fallen to me—had not an uncle of mine managed poorly, and an uncle of yours managed to get the property. Why don’t you congratulate me?”

“Commiserate, I suppose, Monsieur.”

“‘Stop right there, if you please!’ as Lawyer Baldwin says to the witness he cross-questions; you said Monsieur. Excuse me, but I think that is a French word, and I don’t talk French.”

“I accept, Mons—this very polite apology for compelling me to talk in your native tongue.”

“Oh, well, you got the best of me that time, but Monsieur struck me rather grand and formal. I thought—we were beginning to get better acquainted, you see.”

“We have met three times, Mons—Mist—”

“Allow me to help you, Miss Agnes Gleacleaude—my



full name is Ernest Albert Foster. Don't forget the Albert, as we have met but three times."

"Mister Ernest Albert Foster, you wished me to commiserate you——"

"I said congratulate."

"Why congratulate, Mr. Albert Ernest Foster?"

"There, don't you see you have got the name wrong? Don't, for heaven's sake, string those four names together again! I'll tell you. All the boys and girls in the mills call me plain Ernest. Can't you do that—at least when we are alone? It's only one word, and is easy to speak. There's no Monsieur—Mr. Albert—etc."

"Why congratulate you?"

"For a very good reason which I will now give. I don't know as it *will*, but what I am about to say, *ought* to interest you. When I lost these prospective possessions, I found some one who was vastly more interested than trees, rocks and catamount dens—I found you. That is, I saw you—this makes the third time. And to complete this—so to speak—figure of speech, I will again apply the rule of three, by saying that I am thrice as glad as I was the first time I saw you; that instead of meandering alone over my own territory—perchance putting up a bit of fence here, and a few feet of stone wall there, I can, now and then, stroll with you over *your* extensive park and—well, enjoy it ever so much more."

"Mr. Albert Foster," she replied very deliberately, "I admire exceedingly the brave effort you have made to conceal—through a very pretty compliment to myself—the disappointment, I am now quite sure you feel that



this place passed out of your family's hands. But as you truly observe, my uncle has secured a clear title for the Bishop. Possibly he may not care to remain here long, and in that case, very likely he would make it possible for you to redeem the place."

"Oh, you think he *might* be induced to offer me the place, and perhaps hasten his departure, when he comes to know how badly I want it? So, you saw through my illy concealed attempt to hide my disappointment? You convince me that I must be very deep hereafter, if I want to keep you from reading my thoughts. But seriously now, I can't let you carry the impression away that you correctly discerned my thoughts. For you did not. Do you know, Agnes—there, I did not really premeditate leaving off the suffixes and affixes. But you see, when I got to thinking of this new and beautiful friend who has so lately come into my life—which I—I find myself doing very often—I speak of her to myself as simply—Agnes. It's quite natural then, that in thinking aloud, I made the slip of a moment ago. As I was about to observe, do you know—Agnes." He stopped and glanced at her to see how she took this second "slip." She was engaged in some important repairs on her fan, and he did not catch her eye. He continued, "When you spoke of going away, I—felt something—very much like a sharp pain shoot through me. I suppose the idea of a change of existing conditions startled and distracted me. You are, perhaps, not aware that the Fosters are very conservative people, and anything in the nature of a change throws them into terror. And



then I suppose it troubled me not a little to think of the possibility of my losing this new friend I had found. I have been fortunate in many things, but I have lacked for friends—that is, such as are a constant inspiration to a man. Of these, I have but two—my mother, and Agnes. My mother—my noble mother! you'll like her, I know."

"Oh dear! I have broken it!" exclaimed Miss Gleau-  
claude, holding up her fan. "My lovely fan that  
uncle gave me at Christmas! Isn't that too bad?"

"Yes, it's a pity. Let me see if I can't fix it."

"No, thank you. I think I can do it. I like to  
mend fans."

"But you don't know how. You have nearly spoiled  
this costly gift already," said the young man.

"I might not have broken it had you not spoken to  
me as you did. This rivet came out, and as I was try-  
ing to replace it you spoke of your mother. At the  
sound of that name of the best and dearest of all earthly  
beings, my attention was attracted, and as I listened, I  
somehow forgot myself, and broke off this outside piece.  
I don't doubt you have a good mother, Mr. Foster. Oh,  
prize her! obey her, love her and never—never give her  
a cause for anxiety or sorrow, if you can help it. You  
are a thousand times more favored than I am, for my  
mother died many years ago."

Ernest was surprised—not a little, nor happily—at  
the turn the conversation had taken. Had this young  
lady deliberately ignored certain of his remarks, for the  
purpose of showing him that they did not please her, or



that she feared something to follow? Whatever had been lacking when he came to the picnic to convince him that Miss Gleauclaude held the most important place in his heart, had in some way been supplied ere he had been with her an hour. Within that hour he ceased to struggle against his fate, and owned to himself that he was in love.

But there is a vast difference between confessing anything to oneself, and admitting it to another. This secret which Ernest had discovered he intended to keep locked up in his heart for—well, perhaps it would be for years.

Imagine love keeping its secret! or remaining under lock and key!

How many men and women experiencing the supreme ecstasy—or pain of love, have attempted to hide their condition of mind from the world when a word, a look, or some circumstance has surprised them into disclosing their secret—often to the very one from whom they most desired to keep it!

And thus Ernest—startled by what Miss Gleauclaude had said about her uncle's tiring of Mortonville, for it hinted at the possibility of his losing his newly-found friend—was led to make, if not a complete confession of his love, a declaration naturally preliminary to, and suggestive of, that climax. However, he had stopped short of that climax, and as he fain would believe much short of it. Indeed he made himself believe that if she had not interrupted him he should not have offered his heart to her. And he consoled himself with the re-



flection that while she might interpret his words to mean a stronger feeling on his part than mere friendship for her, she could not be sure of it, and would have no right to think it.

Could not he have thus spoken to even a male friend?

He was not ashamed of his love. He was not denying it. He was simply sensitive, and wished to escape from the conclusion that he was on the point of offering it prematurely to one who would on that account, or any other, refuse it. A man will seldom, if ever, offer his hand and his heart to a woman if he has serious doubts of their acceptance. He may be willing to take some chances, but he must see some signs of encouragement or he will hesitate, postpone, and, if the signs grow unfavorable, withdraw from the field. That is to say, a man who is neither reckless nor a fool.

If Ernest had been led to think that this lovely creature, upon whose golden hair, and into whose heavenly eyes he could now never look, and not feel in his heart the intense longings of love, was waiting demurely, and was ready, like a ripe apple, to fall into his arms the moment he opened them, his eyes were opened to his mistake. She was not to be so easily won. While Ernest reflected, he did not allow the conversation to lag, but continued it in the direction Miss Gleauclaude had given to it.

“What you say is true,” he replied. “No one can for a moment be compared to a mother, in her love and devotion to her children. The best of mothers are the noblest of women. It would be very strange,



and a great pity, if two such women as my mother and yourself should live long in the same neighborhood and not know one another well."

"Perhaps we should be afraid, one of the other. Which of us do you think would the most afraid?" said she, looking up at Ernest and smiling.

"Afraid! Why, what do you mean?" he cried.

"Your mother is an ardent Protestant, is she not?"

"O, I see: and you are a still more ardent Catholic. Well, you are both intelligent and Christian women, therefore how could you quarrel?"

"Quarrel! Oh, what an out of place and ugly word! But could we assimilate?"

"As you are women, and sympathetic, I have no doubt of it. Women do not allow dogmas to prevent friendship and sociability as men do. They have, in a word, more tact, more pliability, are more human, and at the same time, more divine."

"Women then, you think, are less opinionated than men: and more willing to waive their beliefs for the sake of harmony and good feeling? There are probably exceptions to this rule: and possibly your mother and I are such exceptions," remarked Miss Gleauclaude, quietly.

"I do not mean that either one of you would give up any belief which you had tenaciously held as important, but that on that one issue you would agree to disagree for the sake of uniting on the thousand others where such women as you two are always of one mind—in



order that the world might continue to move," said Ernest.

"While stubborn and argumentative man blocks the wheels of the world that he may win over an opponent who will not be convinced?"

"That's exactly my idea, Miss Gleauclaude. What do you think of it?"

"O, I—I scarcely dare venture an opinion on a subject I have never thought of until this hour. Your mother, who is older, more experienced, and much wiser than I, could undoubtedly judge much better than I, of the merits of your 'Philosophy of woman's keeping the world in motion.' Suppose you submit your theory to her?" was her reply, as she arose.

"I think I will, as I have double interest in having my theory prove true. Ah—look! No sooner have we decided to allow woman to assume the exalted place which man has often shown he could not fill, than—shall we say her enemies? spy us out."

The young lady turned and saw Mr. Foster and her uncle standing on a knoll not far away, conversing and looking at them.

"I should think from the uneasiness he shows that my father was tired of these festivities and would like to return: and very likely he will want to take his son with him. If I should tarry, could I have the pleasure of dancing with you?"

"What! and disregard your father's wishes? Certainly not."

"But, if I get his permission?"



“He would not give it : and if he did, I must still say no.”

“Heartless creature ! Do you refuse me this little boon on principle, or from perversity ?”

“Perhaps more from necessity—I never learned to dance.”

“Is it possible ? Your early education must have been sadly neglected. But I can bear the thought of that better than I could of your dancing with some one after my father leads me—unwillingly away.”

They were now walking in the direction of their relatives on the knoll.

“By the way, Miss Gleauclaude, do you keep a diary ?” asked Ernest as they walked slowly along.

“Yes,—why ?”

“Please do me the honor of entering my name in it, and write against it : ‘He gave up dancing on the day of the picnic.’ ”

“But think a moment. What if this diary should one day be published ?”

“So much the better. Except they appear in that immortal work, my deeds of self-denial will never be recorded. I beseech you, Miss Gleauclaude, put it down.”

“Think once more, and seriously, Mr. Foster. Temptations are sometimes too strong to be resisted. Dancing I imagine to be a very fascinating pastime. Isn’t it harmless ? Do not make unwise resolutions—that is, such as you will find yourself unable to keep, lest the first entry be made to seem worse than none, by the



second a little farther on, which may read—‘Behold ! he dances !’ It will be very hard for you to abstain—for a long time, at least.”

“On the contrary, it will be very easy ‘for a long time, at least.’”

“That’s contrary to common experience.”

“Not when one is—lame, I reckon.”

“Oh ! you deny yourself because you cannot help it,” exclaimed his companion.

“Certainly, said he, “the same as you do—of necessity.”

“But why did you deceive me by making me think you wanted me to dance with you ?”

“I *did* want you to grant me one favor : and I wanted to get your opinion of the practice.”

“Mr. Foster, you will spoil my temper, I am afraid. I shall put it down now and hold you to it.”

“That’s right. Put it down for pure malice’s sake.”

After the four had returned to the crowd, and just before Ernest started for home with his father, he managed to get an opportunity to say to his partner in charities :

“That little note did me lots of good. I keep it with my other precious things, under lock and key. Keep up the correspondence, Miss Gleauclaude.”

There was no chance for her to reply, except by a look. But that look satisfied him. It went far toward consoling him for a certain set-back he had that day received : and he departed with a light heart, and thinking the world still bright and beautiful.



## IX.

When the Rev. Charles Foster became fully awake to the fact that he and his son were drifting farther and farther apart, or rather, as he viewed it, that his son was diverging daily more and more from a true Christian life, and that he would be held accountable at the judgment if that son were lost : and when, for the first time since Ernest was a child, his heart went out toward him with deep yearnings of love, and he determined that he must and should be saved—he never for a moment expected to be the instrument of his salvation in any but the regular, foreordained, and orthodox way. His re-born love, great as it was, did not make Ernest seem any better, or less of a sinner, than he seemed before. But under the stimulus of love, the hope that had well nigh died, grew strong in his heart. His faith in the power that this love was to have over Ernest was strong. It must and it would tell. He had a constant longing for companionship with his son, and parted from him with reluctance. He watched eagerly to discover some signs that his love was in a measure returned, if not in an equal degree. He desired and sought the closest intimacy with Ernest that he might gain some knowledge of the working of his mind—of his plans and wishes, and then under the gentle and potent pressure of love



he could remonstrate, encourage, or lead, as circumstances required.

The plan which he had formed contemplated this close and constant association with Ernest as far as he would permit it, and in everything proper for himself. This known, the minister's presence at the Catholic picnic is explained.

If his action in attending the picnic seems extraordinary, when his intense disapproval of everything pertaining to the Catholics—from their religious tenets to their amusements—is considered that this explanation is hardly satisfactory, let it be remembered that he had become a man of “one idea.” Every thought, desire, and effort, had but one object in view—the salvation of his son. To accomplish that end, love and conscience propelled him forward whithersoever they would—to anything short of sin.

He settled down to the belief not only that his ministry would be an utter failure if he did not save Ernest, but that his own salvation was dependent on the success of his efforts. The revival meetings were discontinued for a season. And while he went mechanically through the regular routine of his ministerial labors, his heart was chiefly concerned with the great and special task which he felt that God had shown him it was imperative for him to perform before he could expect to be the successful instrument for the salvation of men.

If sometimes the voice of conscience, warning him that the future destiny of the immortal soul which he



had brought into the world was dependent almost entirely upon his efforts and watchfulness, was the most audible, at other times the voice of love sounded loudest; declaring that such expenditure of affection and earnest prayer and desire should not be in vain. And hope never entirely deserted him.

Besides the reasons given for his presence at the picnic, there was another that conduced to take him there. With tireless vigilance he kept continual watch over every avenue through which evil influences could reach Ernest. In some way he had learned that his son and Father Le Grand had a speaking acquaintance. Possibly it was much worse than that, and they might already be very good friends, for there was a rumor that Ernest was in the habit of calling upon the priest. He heard on all sides that the priest was a man of much refinement and learning—that he could be very agreeable, and was very popular with all who made his acquaintance. Believing as he did that the adherents of the Roman Church had less grounds of hope than the heathen, because being less ignorant than that benighted people, they were more guilty, how great and imminent seemed the danger which overhung Ernest, with the life and teaching he had received.

If strong love begat and kept alive in the minister's heart a certain amount of confidence in the result of the struggle he was making for his son, it did not blind him to the fact that, at the best, Ernest was to be plucked as a "brand from the burning." No time must be lost. No opportunity must be neglected which,



if improved, would make more certain and bring nearer the end he aimed at. Impelled by this stress of feeling, his actions at length began to excite the wonder of his people, and to create anxiety in the minds of his wife and son.

Time was when he recognized the calls to duty as multitudinous : and in laboring according to his strength to obey them an equipoise was given to his life. But now he recognized but one supreme and imperative duty—all others were subservient to it—and to the performance of that one he set about with a frenzy that threatened to defeat his purpose, if it did not unbalance his mind.

The very name of Catholicism, or of any person or thing connected with it, was sufficient to engage his most earnest attention. On the morning of the picnic, happening to pick up the county paper issued the day before, his eyes fell upon a bold heading, calling attention to a temperance rally held a few days before in an adjoining town, in which Father Le Grand took an important part. The address of the priest was the chief feature of the meeting, and was given in full. The minister read it carefully, and was not only struck by its forceful arguments and fervid eloquence, but certain passages impressed him with the independency of spirit shown, and their freedom from sectarianism. And the address indicated on the part of its author such a clear discernment of the burdens and wants of men, and of the means of relief : and there breathed through every sentence such sympathy for those who had burdens to bear,



and such a desire to relieve them, that the minister, after laying down the paper and remaining some moments in deep thought, suddenly arose and exclaimed, "I will test this man's sincerity this very day."

For a man who, in the opinion of his people, had shown that he possessed rather more than the average allowance of ministerial dignity and reserve, the course decided upon by which he proposed to test the good faith of the priest, was certainly remarkable. It was nothing else than an earnest appeal which he intended to make to Father Le Grand, to put a stop to the proselyting influences which aimed—as he believed—at making Ernest a Catholic : and enlisting the aid of the priest in an endeavor to turn the steps of the wayward young man toward the religion of his fathers.

He had little expectation that his appeal would be successful, but he felt it his duty to make it.

The meeting of the priest's niece was scarcely calculated to lessen the minister's anxiety. He had not only never met her before, but had never heard of her. As he walked by the side of Father Le Grand toward the spot where shortly a most remarkable interview was to take place, he reflected that here was a new and somewhat alarming element of danger to his son. He speculated as to how long Ernest might have known her, and wondered if it was not the niece instead of the priest that was the attraction on this side of the Shallow. He ended by reproaching himself bitterly for his blindness in not thinking of these things before he parted company with the young people.



What took place at that meeting between the minister and priest was never fully known by anyone but themselves. A couple of lovers desiring to get away from the multitude, had inadvertently come into the vicinity of the two churchmen. The conference was evidently nearly over when these young people came upon the scene. They reported that they saw Father Le Grand seated upon a rock with his head bowed in his hands, while in front of him stood the minister with his hands folded, talking very earnestly as he looked down upon the priest. The listeners could catch but little of what was said, but they heard Mr. Foster distinctly when he put what seemed to be a final question,

“Do you agree to this?”

They observed that Father Le Grand remained immovable for a moment, then he arose, and they heard him reply :

“I agree on certain conditions—”

The remainder of his words they could not hear : and afraid of being seen if they staid longer, the young couple retreated.

When Mr. Foster and his son left the grove, many followed them with their eyes, and perhaps none watched them with greater interest than Father Le Grand and his niece. Certainly no one but these two kept them in sight long enough to see that before they had gone far the minister affectionately linked his arm to his son's, and engaged him in an animated conversation—evidently agreeable to both, judging from their manner as seen at that distance. And had one met father and son, and



into their faces, as they walked homeward, he might well have thought they had enjoyed the picnic. Both looked happy,—which, the more so, it would be difficult to say. The father, his heart burning with love for his son, and believing that the step he had taken was destined to remove some of the obstacles that had kept them apart, made no attempt to conceal the joy that he felt.

Never had his love for his son been so demonstrative. It manifested itself in a multitude of ways. Ernest must have been blind, or preoccupied with his own thoughts, not to have read it in every act and expression of his father's. It revealed itself in every smile, in every glance of the eye, and in the caressing manner in which he drew his son toward himself.

And Ernest, wrapped up in his own sweet fancies, was unconsciously deceiving his father, who, ever longing and looking for some sign that the measureless love of his own heart had touched a responsive chord in his son's, imagined, as he studied Ernest's face, and marked the happy expression that had settled upon it—an expression altogether different from anything he had seen there before—that at last here was an indication that his son was turning towards him.

“God is good, God is good, my son!” he cried, as he drew Ernest still nearer to him.

“Yes, God is good,” replied Ernest, with the air of one who had found something in his own experience that warranted the words.

“And He does not wish to have us separated—oh,



no, He would bring us nearer together, praise His name," continued the minister.

"Separated!" said Ernest, "what shall separate us?—who can or would do it?"

"The world, sin, and hatred have tried, and will try, but they shall not prevail! Love—*our* love, Ernest, and the love of God, shall triumph over our enemies! Love always wins, thank God!"

"Love—always—wins?—*always*? Thank God."

Though relevant, it was the answer of an abstracted mind. It occurred to the minister at that moment that possibly all this rejoicing on his part might be premature. He remembered something he had forgotten—that Ernest and the priest's niece had been together a considerable part of the afternoon. And it flashed through his mind that the labor of love he had been performing within the last two or three hours—solely for the good of his own—might not be entirely approved by that young man. When he left the grove, the minister was in the first flush of his success with Father Le Grand. His anxiety had been relieved, and the future looked bright. The thought that Ernest cherished any feeling stronger than mere friendship for the priest's niece, did not enter his mind. But now the second and sober thought had come. He did not feel so sure that he had rightly interpreted Ernest's looks, and he was far from certain that Ernest had been thinking of him at all while they had been talking together. His cheerfulness forsook him. He longed yet dreaded to know the truth as to Ernest's feelings for the priest's niece.



Suspense, that great disturber of the mind's peace, tormented him, he could not endure it.

"Ernest," he said, "I have you in mind in everything I do. I want you to enjoy yourself—to be happy. Don't you think I do?"

"What a strange question, father!—of course I think so. It would be an unfeeling parent that would want to see his son unhappy."

"Of course I mean *real* happiness."

"Certainly, I understand. There is but one kind, is there?" replied Ernest.

"Some persons call themselves happy, but I cannot think they are really so, because their happiness does not last. It ends in bitterness and often in remorse. To my mind, true happiness is the kind that endures—that we take with us into the next world. That is the kind I want you to have. How much I want you to have it, you can judge when I say that my own happiness is dependent upon your obtaining it. It has come to this, Ernest: I live for that, and every move I make is with that end in view."

"I take you at your word, father. Of course after what you have now told me, I must conclude that you came with me to-day to prevent, if possible, my doing anything that might jeopardize my future real and lasting happiness."

"For that, and another reason. My heart turns to you as never before, Ernest; I long to be with you as far, and as constantly as we can go together."

"I will not ask you whether it has occurred to you



that your coming here on such an errand was not a singular thing to do, for now that you have done it the question would be too late. Nor will I ask if acting as a spy upon your son is calculated to win his affection and his confidence. But I will simply ask what you have discovered?—And what you have done that will tend to make him happy?—as these were your motives for coming.”

“Your reproachful words and looks cut into my heart like a knife, Ernest, but I must bear the pain. If I suffer, I am supported by the thought that the time is coming when you will understand me better than you do now, and realize how great your father’s love was. I think that time is coming, Ernest. You asked me what I discovered. My answer is that I discovered a man, claiming to be the true servant of God, sitting calmly by, and sanctioning the performance, while a multitude of his ignorant and miserable followers indulged in wanton and wicked revelry. I saw—”

“Excuse me for interrupting you,” said Ernest, “but I would like to ask if the Gospel was not meant for the ‘ignorant,’ the poor, and the miserable, as well as for the learned, the rich, and ‘the better classes.’ As I understand the Scriptures, it is the sick and not those who are well that need a physician.”

“I admit it, but what a physician he is who encourages his patients in prolonging and extending their disease. I saw how sinners enjoy themselves, and I wondered—I marveled, Ernest, to think there was anything in their practices that was attractive to you. And these people, Ernest,—how can you associate with them?”



“These people! Father Le Grand and Miss Gleau-claude have honored me with their friendship. I have never met their superior—no, nor equal—in culture, nobleness, and kindness,” replied Ernest.

“Poor, blind, deceived, infatuated boy!” cried the minister.

“I might return the compliment, and add *prejudiced*,” said Ernest.

“You asked me,” continued the minister, “what I had done that would tend to make you happy. I cannot say. I cannot tell what good I may have done to-day until you tell me how far your friendship for the priest’s niece has gone.”

A sudden pallor overspread his son’s face. He was silent a moment, and then he came to a stand-still, turned and looked directly into his father’s face, and in a voice, low but positive and distinct, replied:

“As far as this—I love her.”

The minister staggered under Ernest’s words as under a blow. Matters were so much worse than anything he had dreamed of that after his son’s declaration he could do nothing but gaze at him in speechless amazement.

If he had been on the point of disclosing to Ernest the object and result of his interview with the priest, he could not—he dared not—do it now. They came to the bridge, crossed it in silence, and then separated, Ernest going up the road to visit some men who were at work on the canal, and his father, with his head upon his breast and his eyes upon the ground, moving slowly towards the parsonage.



## X.

Early in the afternoon of Monday, as Ernest entered the office after having gone the round of the mills, Major Copeland looked up with a smile, and remarked :

“There is something very remarkable about the hand-writing of our French women here. They not only write a fine hand, but you cannot tell one from the other. Now, there is a letter on your desk left by a Giraud boy—probably from Madame Giraud—and the writing is exactly like Madame Beaubien’s.”

“Well, Major, don’t let it prey on your mind and deprive you of rest. Perhaps these worthy women get a certain writer to direct their letters,” replied Ernest, assuming an indifferent air.

“Ah ! I see. You have undoubtedly solved the problem, Ernest. The letter is in a different hand from the envelope. It *has* troubled me, you know. I suppose to set my mind at rest, the next one that comes I shall be at liberty to—”

“To lay it on my desk—as usual, Major.”

At that moment a messenger came from the mill for the “Super,” and Ernest put the letter into his pocket, and followed the boy into the mill.

An overseer had sent for him to consult with him about a machine which had just broken. When the



superintendent had given orders about repairing it, he went to the lower end of the room, descended a flight of stairs, passed out of a rear door, and entered the cotton house, where he knew he would be unobserved. He then opened and read his letter, which was as follows :

“MY FRIEND : When this note reaches you I shall have left Mortonville. I go early to-morrow morning. You will think it strange that I cannot tell you why I go. But I cannot. While my uncle does not feel like giving his reasons at present for advising this step, he has convinced me that it is best.

“Accustomed to follow his advice, and unable to recall a single instance when that advice was not for the best, I submit without hesitation to his judgment. He tells me that he feels it would be neither courteous nor right to go away without some acknowledgment of the kindness and consideration which you have shown us during our short and very pleasant acquaintance with you.

“We came here not only as strangers, but foreigners, and it was perhaps but natural that many of the good people among the native residents looked upon us and our religion with distrust, and accorded to us a reception in which warmth and cordiality were lacking.

“In marked contrast to the general treatment has been the welcome extended to us by yourself and the noble benefactor of the village—Monsieur Morton.

“While we have no reproaches for those who honestly fear our religion because they have always been taught



to do so, we can hardly express our admiration for the friendly and Catholic spirit you have manifested toward us. We can never forget it and shall never cease to be grateful to you for it.

“So much my uncle joins me in saying—And now, what last word shall I say for myself? For last word, my uncle assures me, and I feel, it must be. Standing here at the point where our brief friendship closes, and where we separate, never—as something tells me—to meet again, I find that I cannot turn away in silence—without any allusion whatever to the pleasant acquaintance that has existed between us. A true friendship, although it be a brief one, is something of too much worth to be thus slighted. And while I am not sure that I ever saw through and beyond the varying phases of your manner and expression when you were with me, and discovered your real self, your kind efforts on every occasion that offered, to make my stay in Mortonville as pleasant as possible, have won my gratitude—and made us friends. Accept my deepest thanks for all your kindness. Our parting, like our first meeting, comes suddenly and unexpectedly—but is it not all for the best? Think, my friend, would it not have come sooner or later? If so, then, it is best as it is, and we have but to submit to the inevitable and say farewell. Is it not so? But I am forgetting that you cannot answer me. Possibly as you review in thought—if you ever care to—these few weeks, now ended, you will recall some things you said, and your conscience may mildly accuse you for having spoken—even at ‘random’—words never meant



to be taken seriously. Conscientious friend, if ever troubled by such a thought—but you will not be, for you are here assured that your words were taken in the spirit in which they were uttered : and hence no harm was done whether you feigned or felt what you expressed.

“If, by and bye, I make the choice often urged upon me, and give up the world, and shut myself away from its pleasures and temptations to engage in an endless round of prayers and sacrifices, I may still remember you—in my prayers : and shall ever pray for your soul, and that you may never suffer pain, nor be unhappy, as the result of having met and known

“AGNES.”

Ernest raised the letter to his lips, and kissed her name over and over again. Then returning it to his pocket, he walked out of the building and down to the bank of the Shallow. He looked across the river to the house that had sheltered her, and from which, as he believed, she had been driven, and felt that without her presence it would evermore be as cheerless as the tomb.

From the house his eyes wandered to the left until they fell upon a clump of trees whose tops towered above the others. Beneath those trees he had parted from her. A rich growth of leaves, young and fresh, covered every limb and twig, and hid each trunk. The new mantle of shaded green, with which Nature, while spring is departing and summer beginning, clothes all her children of the forest, was hastening to completion. It was the very time when human hearts beat with brighter



hopes, and when all creatures, and all things that have the germ of growth, are glad.

But to Ernest the outlook was more dreary than on the gloomiest December day he had ever known. He found no comfort in gazing upon the fair prospect before him, where everything was so suggestive of returning life and joy. In his desolation, the appeal which Nature seemed to be making to him—"Be glad, be happy, for all the earth is full of joy," was like mockery.

Just in front of him the eddying current had plowed into the bottom of the river, making a large basin, round and deep. This pool had long been known by the villagers by the dreadful name of "the bottomless pit."

Ernest had many times before this looked into its black depths and turned shuddering away. But now he drew near to the water's edge, and gazed into the pool.

"I never thought," he said aloud, at length, "that the bottomless pit would ever tempt me to—but if I thought—if I knew—"

"Foster!"

At the sound of his name Ernest turned and saw Mr. Morton standing near the cotton house, and beckoning to him. In answer to the manufacturer's summons, he hastened to him.

"Have you heard about Dan?" asked Mr. Morton, when Ernest came up.

"Dan Morse? No. What is it?"

"The poor fellow is badly hurt—run over by the cars in boarding the train at Salem Falls. They say he can't



live. I thought you or I would go down there at once to see what could be done for him."

"Shall I go?" asked Ernest.

"You can do a great deal better in such a case than I can, Erny. I wish you would go. Let everything be done that can be. Get the best doctors, and don't mind any expense that will make the poor fellow comfortable. It's a bad job—bad job that Dan's got into," said the manufacturer sadly.

Mr. Morton's horse had been ordered and was waiting at the office door. Ernest sprang into the buggy, and in half an hour entered the room at the hotel in Salem Falls where Dan lay.

Two physicians, and a man used to the care of the sick, were in attendance. Dan was at the moment under the influence of a powerful opiate which had been administered. His eyes were closed, his face of a deathly whiteness, and his hands lay motionless on the outside of the coverlet. Catching the eye of Doctor Douglas, the older of the two physicians and one of the foremost in the county, Ernest motioned to him to follow him into the corridor.

"Doctor, how bad is it?" he asked, when they were outside of the sick room.

"Bad enough. The wheels passed over both legs above the knees, completely severing them. The loss of blood was very great," was the reply.

"What are his chances?"

"Few and poor. Ninety-nine against him. If he lives a week he may recover. He is liable to die before morning," said the Doctor.



"Have you told him?" asked Ernest.

"Told him? Why, what are you thinking of, young man? I don't tell patients they are a-going to die, for they may get well if I don't frighten them to death with such a piece of news," explained the old Doctor, in his well-known blunt way.

Ernest and Doctor Douglas held a consultation of considerable length, and were still talking together in suppressed tones when they heard Dan's voice.

"Amen! Bless God!" he shouted, and Ernest was surprised to hear the words uttered with nearly the old-time vigor.

The Doctor and Ernest returned at once to the sick room. When Dan saw Ernest he said:

"I'm glad you've come, Mr. Foster."

Ernest drew a chair to the side of the bed, and took the hand which was extended to him, saying as he did so, while tears filled his eyes:

"O, Dan! Dan! I pity you."

"I don't doubt it. You was allers red dy to symperthize with ennybody in trouble. But we must make on't. It might er been wuss. I'm glad 'twan't Jim Dobson, nor nobuddy with a family to leave."

Here Dan was seized with a paroxysm of pain which lasted some minutes, and was followed by faintness. Ernest thought he was dying. When the spasm passed Dan resumed:

"I feel I hain't got a great while ter stay, and they's a few things, if you'll see see to 'em, it'll be a great fayor."



“I will, Dan—I will do anything you want done,” said Ernest.

“Hev yer got a piece of paper?” asked Dan.

Ernest took a memorandum-book and pencil from his pocket, which seeing, Dan continued :

“I’ve got six hundred dollars in the savings bank here. I want all of my debts paid from it, and what’s left I want handed to my old father, who’ll be here if you let him know. I think I owe Uncle Bina a dollar and forty cents. Be sure and pay him. I may be mistaken ez to the amount, but pay him what he says it iz, if it’s ten dollars. He’ll tell it just as ’tis. I signed twenty dollars for preaching the coming year. Be sure that it’s paid. They’s a store bill of—maybe three or four dollars, and a board bill for two weeks—pay ’em.”

Dan was again compelled to stop talking, owing to a recurrence of the pain and exhaustion. Some time elapsed before he was able to proceed. At length he took up the thread of his will as follows :

“My good old father taught me to be a Christian and a blacksmith. I’ve tried to be faithful in both callin’s. Ef I—don’t—see him—please tell him so. I hain’t got no near relations but him, and he’s to hev all my things—my chist of tools and everything.

“They’s one thing tho’ that I want ter give ter Jim Dobson—it’s my new Bible. The old one that father giv me goes back to him. But this new one Jim liked ever so much. Jim couldn’t afford one with his big family to care for, and I’d calkalated ter git him one jess like it. Give it ter him. They’s many passages in it which I’ve



found comfortin'—I've marked 'em. They are passages of promise and experience. Jim and I hev been in the habit of marking the passages in the Bible that we hev found true in our experience. If it hain't too much trouble you might tell Jim to find these words in my Bible :

“ ‘Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil : for Thou art with me : Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me.’ They are in it somewhere. Ask him to find 'em, and write against 'em : ‘Dan's last experience.’ This is my will. I'd sign it, but I'm very tired, and I can't see.”

“You need not sign it, Dan. Everything shall be done as you direct,” Ernest assured him.

“Thank you,” was the feeble response.

It took a long time to make his brief will. Weak when he began, he steadily grew weaker while dictating it. But he held his mind closely to the task, and mustered his rapidly-lessening strength to perform it. Although a light had been brought in, as he had said—he could not see. How truly it is described as the “dark valley !”

Ernest determined to remain with Dan through the night, in company with one of the physicians. One or two at a time those in attendance upon the sick man had been out to supper, and all were now assembled in the sick-chamber. They sat in silence round the room. From time to time the solemn stillness was broken by Dan's faintly uttering some word or sentence—one of his much-used and well-known shibboleths.

Some time passed in this way—perhaps a couple of



hours. All noticed that the sick man articulated with increasing difficulty. By ten o'clock he spoke only in whispers. Ernest, who sat near, holding his hand, could just make out what he said. It was the same fervent, though feeble and indistinct repetition of the old expressions, "Amen! Bless God!" and "God is good."

At a little past ten, Dr. Douglas arose with the intention of going. He wished to take a closer look at his patient and examine his pulse before leaving. At his request the other physician quietly moved the lamp so that the light would fall on Dan's face. When this was done Dr. Douglas stepped to the side of the bed near to where Ernest sat, and looked at Dan. All eyes were fastened upon the sick man's countenance.

Suddenly, while all were observing him closely, he stretched his hands upward. Joy and wonder were stamped upon his face. His lips moved, and Ernest bending over him caught the words, "Glory! Glory! Glory!" growing fainter with repetition like the voice of one passing farther and farther into the distance. A moment later Dan's hands dropped by his side, and he lay motionless, with a happy expression on his face.

Dr. Douglas quietly stepped to the side of the bed, felt of his pulse, and said in a low tone :

"It is over—he's dead."

Thus had Dan's spirit gone.

"As he lived, so he died—a true saint," said Ernest solemnly.

"I have aimed for many years to shun death-beds," observed Dr. Douglas, "and I did not mean to be here



at this time, but I thank God for what I have witnessed. It has strengthened my waning faith, and banished the doubts I have felt of there being any virtue in a Christian life and a Christian's hope."

For many years Dan had tried to convince men that there was something in the "love of God" that was better than anything the world could give, but he had seemed to succeed but poorly. He was looked upon by many as an "odd stick." No one questioned his sincerity, but he was too noisy to be agreeable to some, and too religious for others.

But when the circumstances of his death were related, and the people learned from those who had been around his death-bed, of his marvelous patience, his resignation, his calmness at the approach of death, and especially of that last sublime moment when his spirit took its flight—then it was that his influence began to be powerfully felt.

More than twenty-five years have passed since Dan Morse died: but still he is not forgotten in Mortonville. Far from it. Many date their "new birth" from that solemn and impressive event. And when—as is sometimes the case—some speaker at the prayer-meeting refers to Dan Morse and his "translation," all are impressed, but most deeply those who knew him and had looked down upon him when he was in the flesh.



## XI.

To a man deeply in love, and his course of love running the opposite of smoothly, there is apt to come a time when he can no longer deliberate. He must act, or die : so he thinks.

Ernest had reached that point that afternoon while he was standing on the brink of the "bottomless pit," and at the very moment the news came of the accident to Dan. Not that he contemplated committing that awful act, which would have startled and shocked the village much more than Dan's death had done. He was neither hopeless nor insane, and suicide is the recourse only of those who are one or the other.

But he felt that there was no certainty of his mind's remaining sound if he sat down and waited for matters to "come right." Action, and not repose, was the antidote for a mind affected as his was.

The tragic event that had thrown the community into such a state of excitement had kept his mind busy for several days, and dulled his sense of his own trouble. But after Dan was buried, Ernest turned to himself again.

The funeral was Wednesday. During Thursday, Ernest had reached the conclusion that he would call upon Father Le Grand that evening. He settled upon



this as the first step towards finding out where Agnes had gone. For he was determined to find her.

“Father Le Grand knows why she went away, and where she has gone,” he said to himself. “He may not consent to enlighten me on either point, but he shall have the opportunity to refuse, at any rate.”

On his way to the priest’s house that evening there was evident in his looks and manner no small amount of determination. Somehow he felt that he was the only friend of the priest’s niece in the place; and that he was not prompted to go upon his present errand solely by his love for her, but partly because his sense of justice cried out against the wrong that had been done her. His feeling toward his father had reached a state of bitter resentment, for he looked upon him as the prime mover in this persecution of the priest’s niece.

Thus far, his resentment had not taken the priest in. But as he pursued his way, it dawned upon his mind that Father Le Grand had himself sent Agnes away. Why had he done it? Did she want to go? There was no evidence to show that. Her letter led him to believe that she was ordered to go. Was she sent away at the request of his father or get her away from him? And had the priest and the minister joined hands then in this wicked scheme to separate them? But with whom but the priest could the monstrous idea of sending Agnes to a convent—for the allusion in her letter was undoubtedly to this—have originated? Agnes had said that she had been often urged to take this step. Who had urged her? Who but her uncle was likely to do it? No one.



And now his whole nature rose in condemnation of the priest. He longed to stand before him and denounce him for his cruel treatment of Agnes. He quickened his steps, and soon reached the priest's house. Giving the door-bell a not very gentle pull, he brought Father Le Grand promptly to the door.

The priest was surprised to see Ernest, and although he extended to him a very polite greeting, Ernest thought he appeared somewhat embarrassed, and it strengthened his determination to be unsparing in his denunciation.

Father Le Grand led the way into his library, where he offered Ernest one of his easy chairs, and then seating himself, waited for his visitor to speak.

Ernest did not accept the seat offered him. He stood once more in the house where but a few days before he had passed a happy hour with the woman he loved. She had been driven from it, and from him. The room in which he had passed that evening with her was dark. Everything about him seemed to say to him, "She is gone." Where is she? was the sole thought that possessed him.

He faced the priest, glared at him steadily for a moment, and then asked—or rather demanded :

"Where is Agnes?"

The peremptory manner in which Ernest put the question irritated the priest, but he did not show it, only as his reply indicated it.

"Don't stand, Mr. Foster—you'll be much more comfortable seated. I supposed that you knew that my niece had gone. Didn't she write to you?" was his answer.



"Yes, she wrote me that she was *compelled* to go. Where has she gone? and who compelled her to go?" said Ernest, paying no attention to the priest's renewed invitation to make himself comfortable.

"My young friend,"—the priest spoke slowly and calmly—"unless you change your manner of addressing me, I am afraid you will get little satisfaction from this visit. You speak as a man of authority would speak to one who is guilty of some crime or great wrong."

"I speak for Agnes, whom you and my father have wronged," cried Ernest, with flashing eye and rising excitement.

"O, you speak for her? Let us understand each other, Mr. Foster. Has she given you the authority to speak for her?"

Ernest's eyes fell before the priest's, as he replied :

"No."

"I thought not. Well, now, she has given me that right. From that you may imagine that she looks upon me as a friend and not an enemy. You have charged that I have done her wrong. Be more explicit, and tell in what particular."

"I will," exclaimed Ernest. "She came here to live. There is reason to believe that this was to be her home, and that she was happy here. She loved the place I am quite sure. She was doing good here to these people—for she was an angel. But though an angel, she loved freedom, and the right to come and go as she chose. From this place of her choice she is sent away. And where has she gone? I shudder, and grow sick at heart,



as I think what you—influenced in some unaccountable way by my father—have determined for her. In God's name, do not blot out the light and hope of Agnes' life by sending her to that horrible religious prison that goes by the name of a convent! If you had the right to do it, I cannot understand how a man—such as I have believed you to be, could have the *heart* to do by his niece as you are doing."

To this outburst, Father Le Grand replied in the most quiet manner :

"For a disinterested person, you make a very earnest plea in behalf of my niece. I am surprised at the earnestness of your appeal, but more surprised that you felt called upon to make it. As you have in no way attempted to justify this remarkable visit, I feel that I should be justified in refusing to reply to what you have said, and in requesting you to withdraw. The terms which you have applied to an institution held in respect and reverence by the members of our faith would also warrant me in turning my back upon you. But I shall answer you better than you deserve.

"The strong appeal which you have made for my niece was altogether needless. She has her liberty. It is in no way abridged. I advise her, but never seek to turn her in any direction by holding a penalty over her. I never compel her to do anything. As to her entering a convent—that is left entirely to herself to decide. I have never encouraged her doing it—on the contrary, what I have said has borne the other way. I did counsel her to leave Mortonville, and when I make known to



her—as I shall some day—my chief reason for doing so, she will admit the wisdom of it. She was indeed satisfied that it was best for her to go, before she went. She has gone, and I do not”—he corrected himself—“and does not intend to return. A school-mate, a dear friend of hers, has taken the veil, and she may do the same. But—selfishly, I fear—I am praying that God may not impress the belief upon her mind that she is called to do it.”

Ernest dropped into a chair as the priest closed. He was thrown into the deepest dejection, and his white face appealed to Father Le Grand for mercy as he asked :

“Am I not to know where she is?—May I not see her?”

“While I do not feel that I have the right to answer positively yes or no, to your question—for it doesn’t rest entirely with me—my judgment is that it would not be wise for you to see her, nor communicate with her : and my opinion is that you could not learn of her whereabouts if you sought to do it,” said Father Le Grand.

“Father Le Grand,” Ernest rose and stood before the priest as he spoke, “I love your niece. You may have guessed it—you now know it. I love her deeply, truly, and with all my heart.” And then with a sigh, “No man ever loved a woman more. Will you give your consent to my telling her so?”

“You ask my consent. Have you already told her?” asked Father Le Grand.



“No.”

“Does she mistrust it?”

“I do not know. Read this.” And Ernest handed him Agnes’ letter.

The priest read the letter very carefully twice, and then returned it to Ernest, saying :

“You see, she does not expect to meet you again.”

“But if she knew I loved her, and how miserable I am since she went away, perhaps—”

“Perhaps she would be as unhappy as you are,” interrupted the priest. “Misery loves company, and if you could only let her know how badly you feel, I presume, as she is a very sympathetic person, she would be miserable too. Is that what you want?”

“If I cannot win her love, I shall care but little for her sympathy. If I felt that she was indifferent to me, and that the case was hopeless, I—”

“But isn’t it a hopeless case?” said Father Le Grand, again interrupting.

“How am I to know until I see Agnes?—unless she has told you something that convinces you my fate—”

“O, I don’t mean in that respect. It never entered my head to ask her whether you were any dearer to her than other friends, and I never have. But in another aspect, is it not an altogether hopeless case?” asked the priest.

“I do not understand you,” said Ernest.

“Well, are you at liberty to offer yourself to my niece? Can you do it with the full and cheerful consent of your father? I have the impression that he



would not be pleased to have his son form an alliance with a foreigner and Catholic. If he should oppose it, that would of course make it impossible."

"Why so? I am my own master. He has no power over me; and in this matter I will *not* obey him!" exclaimed Ernest.

"You will hardly expect me—a Catholic priest—to encourage disobedience to parents," remarked Father Le Grand, while a peculiar smile stole over his face. "Our rule is to require the consent of parents or guardians in these matters."

Ernest's countenance fell. He turned and walked towards the door slowly, and then came back to his chair. Seating himself he rested his arms upon the table, and with his head clasped in his arms, he was a picture of misery. After a few moments spent in this attitude, he remarked, gloomily:

"What is the use of telling me to get his consent? I would do anything, and suffer any humiliation, if he would only give it. But he won't—and you *know* he won't, Father Le Grand! You don't admit it—you may deny it—but I feel sure that it was something *he* said that led to Agnes' being sent away." Then suddenly he sprang up, and with intense feeling he cried: "Good God! is it possible that you will lend yourself to carrying out his contemptible prejudices, although you see it is driving me to desperation? Father Le Grand, my father is in the wrong in this matter, because he is blinded by his prejudices, but you should be broader and more humane, as you are unbiased. I tell you that *love*



is older than either of your religions, and it has the sanction of God as well as either ! My love for Agnes is the noblest emotion that ever moved me—it has made me a better man. I have some hope that if she was free to tell me the thoughts of her heart, I should find she was not indifferent to me. How *dare* you, a minister of God, stand between us ? To me, she is an angel whom He has sent to bring me nearer to Him. And you and my father interpose with your human judgments and inhuman prejudices to prevent the work He designs to do through her. Justify yourselves in the eyes of God, if you can ! but if you imagine that anything you can do or say, either of you, can quiet me, turn me from her, or cause me to forget her, or cease to love her,—you will be mistaken. And until I hear from her own lips that she does not and cannot return my love, I will never give her up !”

“Be seated, and hear me,” said Father Le Grand. “Your regard for my niece has reached a point much beyond anything I had dreamed of. I did not know until this evening that you loved her. This forces me to see that a possible crisis is at hand. The greatest desire of my heart—the one that rises above and overshadows all others—is the desire that my niece may be happy here, and hereafter. I wish for Agnes just what your father wishes for you. Your father conscientiously believes that *your* happiness can only be secured by separating you from such influences as we bring about you, and he satisfied me that, considering the difference of your religious training, it was best that you and Agnes part before any serious attachment—which we did not



imagine then existed—should be formed. It seems that we were too late to prevent it on your part. If Agnes escaped, and is still heart-whole, as her letter to you intimates she is, I shall be relieved. Forgive me, if this seems cruel to you, but, like your father, I am chiefly concerned in the welfare of my own household. But,” the priest arose, thought a moment, and then resuming his seat, asked: “Is it too late to let the matter end where it is? Think! You are not sure of winning Agnes. If she refuses you, you will wish you had taken my advice and stopped here.”

With a weary air Ernest leaned back in his chair, and dropping his eyes upon the floor, replied:

“I cannot stop—I cannot reason. Whatever befalls me I can hardly be more wretched than I am now. I must know my fate, and I must learn it from Agnes herself.”

“My son, that ends it!—you shall have your wish——”

“Thank God?” cried Ernest, springing up.

“Wait a moment,” commanded the priest, “I have not finished. You shall have your way, but first, go to your father and tell him of your intention, and ask for his consent. But something tells me to pause a moment—that you may reconsider your determination to see Agnes. Even now it is not too late. I ask you—once for all—to give her up, and become a stranger to her. Will you do it?”

The words of Father Le Grand, uttered in the most solemn manner, might have turned Ernest from his purpose had he been faint-hearted, or had his love



been less than it was, but being as it was, his heart propounded the question to his heart, "Will you give up Agnes?"—and the priest was promptly answered:

"No," said Ernest firmly, "I will not do it."

"Very well," resumed the priest, "be it as you will. Go to your father. You are sure that your love for my niece is deep, strong and enduring—'No man ever loved a woman more'—those are your words. When you have seen your father your love will have been tested. You may then waver—it would not be strange—and listen to his entreaties. But if your love survives the test, come to me, and I will tell you where Agnes is and give you full permission to win her if you can."

Ernest was about to reply, but the priest raised his hand and silenced him. Then rising and straightening his tall and powerful frame to its full height, he fixed upon Ernest a piercing look. In his countenance was the sign of some resolution formed, and as Ernest looked up into the strong—and, at that moment—stern face, he had little doubt that whatever that resolution was, it would be carried out.

"If it does not survive his bitter opposition, you must not return—it would be perilous for you to do so."

Ernest never forgot the calmness—the terrible calmness—with which Father Le Grand spoke.

"Your father," he continued, "may be forgiven for believing that my niece is nothing more than one of the countless pure and noble women who beautify and bless the earth. He may be forgiven, because he does not know her. But *you* know her—you love her. How then can



you justify yourself if, for any cause, your love so much as falters? You could not justify yourself to *me*. If then, you do not come quickly to me to confirm your earnest declarations of this evening see to it that you do not cross my path. I have but little more to say, and when that is said, I desire that you leave me—it is this. I cannot offer you one word encouraging you to think that your love is returned. You go forth with little hope. If, therefore, you at this moment will elect to stop where you are, you are absolved from any obligation to my niece, and I am still your friend. Will you do it?"

"No, I will not," said Ernest, and, without another word he arose and left the house.



## XII.

Ernest had a very painful interview with his father on Friday morning. Mr. Foster used every argument at his command to deter Ernest from his purpose, but all his efforts were unavailing.

Early Saturday morning Ernest called upon the priest, and when Father Le Grand came to the door, he said :

“ I come for your blessing and a Godspeed—I am going to Agnes.”

“ Not so fast, my young friend,” replied the priest. “ Come in for a moment.” And then ushering Ernest into the library and giving him a chair, he made him relate everything that had taken place in the interview with his father.

“ And you are still bound to see Agnes, in spite of your father’s and my warning ?” said Father Le Grand.

“ Oh ! I *must*, Father Le Grand. I love her ! I *love* her ! Do you know what that means ?” cried Ernest.

“ My son,” answered the priest, with emotion grasping Ernest’s hand. “ I no longer doubt you. I am convinced that your love for Agnes is pure, noble and steadfast, and although to me there is not among women the equal of my niece, I confess that I think you are worthy of her. There ! I never expected to find the



man of whom I believed that. You have won my respect, and more than that, you create in me a much more affectionate feeling. But what do you care for the love of the old priest! 'Tis the niece whom you want—well—”

Father Le Grand took a piece of paper and wrote on it, and handed it to Ernest, and then continued: “Agnes is in Montreal. There is her address. Go and see her; you have my permission, and you go with my blessing.”

Then smiling and shaking his head slowly, he said: “But my permission and blessing can do nothing towards helping you to win her. What if in spite of these, and my great respect for you, she refuses to be won? Alas! I cannot help it! I can only pity you. But go—I can do no more for you—your fate is in her hands, monsieur.”

Within an hour, Ernest was on his way to Montreal. Perhaps it would have distressed some of his good friends in Mortonville to have known that, when he boarded the train, he took a “smoker.” However, that was what he did. He had been enjoying his cigar for a short time, not dreaming there was a person on the train whom he knew, when a man a few seats in front of him happened to turn round, and he saw his mistake. The man was Lem Baker. Lem noticed him and at once came back and took a vacant seat in front of him.

“Hello! wher’n natur you goin’ tew, Mr. Foster?” he asked, as he came up.



“To Montreal—and you?”

“St. Albans,” answered Lem.

“Isn’t that a great way from home, for you,” asked Ernest.

“Yis, ’tis—quite venturesum—further’n I ever went afore. Gess what that is,” said Lem, handing to Ernest a small iron contrivance about the size of a pocket rule when shut up.

Ernest took it and examined it for a few moments, and then asked if it was a puzzle.

“A puzzle,” cried Lem. “Well, I reckon you’ve hit it purty near. It’s ter puzzle *burglarrers* when they want ter git inter your room. They kin pick the lock mebbe, but they can’t do nothin with that little item,—n—no sir, not much!”

“Quite ingenious. Is it an invention of yours?” inquired Ernest.

“Intirely so. O, we hain’t all ijits up in Mortonville, be we?”

“Not as long as we have inventors among us,” replied Ernest, handing the “burglarrer ketch,” as Lem called it, back to the owner.

“What sort of a gimcrack ye got there? a pertater parer? bawled one of two farmer-like looking men sitting several seats in the rear.

This made the other man laugh, and attracted the attention of many in the car to Lem.

“Not ezactly, Mr. Tatertops,” replied Lem, his temper ruffled a little by the man’s manner. “It’s a corn-sheller. Likewise it’s good to make hens lay.”



Several besides the other men laughed now.

“How’ll ye make hens lay with that air tool?” asked the farmer-like man, still unsatisfied.

“Make ’em lay down, if ye hit ’em with it,” said Lem. “Come, Tatertops, buy one,—only a quarter,” sung out a passenger. And then most of the occupants of the car gathered around Lem and bought him out.

“Tatertops” redeemed himself by making the first purchase. Ernest barely managed to get one of the articles, so rapidly did the great closing-out sale take place.

After completing this stroke of business, Lem settled back on his seat in a very contented frame of mind—by turns talking to Ernest, watching the farms and villages by which they were speeding, and dozing.

When Lem was napping Ernest quite naturally fell to thinking of Agnes, and he wished more than once that his loquacious friend would sleep longer at a time than he did. After every awakening Ernest waited with some impatience for Lem to give the final jerk to the broad brim of his very flexible felt hat, which would give it the appearance of a black tunnel, and bring it well down over his eyes,—for this was the signal that Lem was about to take another snooze.

Lem may have had many a pleasant dream—albeit he snored quite loudly at times—on that journey, but it is to be feared that he interrupted Ernest in his castle-building so often that that young man never got a great ways above the foundation, until Lem got off the train at St. Albans.



Imagine Ernest sitting there with his arms folded, and his eyes turned towards a window, a "far-away" look in them, that possibly swept by persons and places near and took in Montreal and a certain person there; a smile on his shapely lips, and his thoughts busy with very pretty plans—when suddenly the black tunnel in front of him is given a quick tilt backward, a red face is turned toward him, and Lem's lusterless eyes are fastened upon him, and then comes:

"Make hay while the sun shines—that's the idea. Don't you say so, Mr. Foster?"

Ernest reluctantly leaves his air-castle and comes down to talk with this man who has called, although he doesn't feel willing to spare a moment just now. "Yes," he replies, he thinks it is an excellent maxim. But he isn't sure that he can see his own way clear to apply the injunction. He wishes he might.

"Make hay while the sun shines," repeats Lem, "and I would add, *whar* it shines. Don't you say so, Mr. Foster?"

"Oh certainly! certainly!" assented Ernest.

"You've *got* tew, hain't ye? Hain't no other way, is there?"

The young man with a sigh admits that there is not.

"Well, you're goin' ter Monterral—what er you goin' there *for*?"

Ernest was tempted to tell his companion, none of his business, but fortunately Lem didn't give him a chance.

"And what am I goin' ter St. Albans for? Because



its cloudy in Mortonville jist now—for both *you* and *me*.”

“What do you mean by that?” inquired Ernest, not very pleasantly, fearing Lem was drifting toward something disagreeable.

“I meant you can’t make hay in Mortonville—not jist now. But up in Monterral, tho’ it’s a ruther back’ard place, you expect there’s a leetle sunshine there for you, and that you’ll dew suthin’ at hayin’. Likewise in St. Albans, I’m layin’ out ter cure a big crop. My son lives there, and he writ me that they’d been a sight burglar-raries there lately—in the banks, and all ’round. When I got that letter, the fust words that come to me was,—‘make’—”

“O, I see,—very good,” interrupted Ernest, and then he turned and looked out of the window, hoping that his companion would become drowsy again. And so he did. In a short time he yanked down his hat, and very soon after was snoring vigorously.

Ernest was very much afraid that the conductor, who soon came along, would awaken Lem in order to see his ticket, but to his infinite relief, the conductor remembered him, and passed on.

Again Ernest folded his arms and looked out of the window, and very probably forgot his environments as he became absorbed in his work upon that imaginary structure. It must have been pleasant work. For now and then a smile came, lingered a moment, went and came again. And now and then his face was transfigured by an expression that was almost better than his smile.



Half an hour passed, and Ernest scarcely changed his attitude. Neither did Lem. Ernest might have been unconscious of Lem's existence for another half hour or longer, but for a quick, shrill whistle of "down brakes." There was a sudden lessening of the train's speed that threw the "inventor" nearly over the seat in front of him, followed by a still more rapid darting ahead that caused him to                    himself with lightning-like dispatch—the outcome of which complex movement was to deposit one tunnel-shaped hat in Ernest's lap, which hat immediately emptied itself of abandann a handkerchief, one printed circular, one letter from the owner's son John, and one wooden comb.

As soon as he could catch his breath, Lem sprang up, and with a face as white as an unusually red one could become with so short a notice, exclaimed:

"What under the canopy's the marter?"

"Nothing serious, I guess," said Ernest, handing over Lem's hat, and then gathering up the scattered articles that came out of it.

"That's the worst thanker marm I ever rid through anywhere," remarked Lem.

"Something was on the track, probably," explained Ernest.

"What do they dew in such a case—jump over it, or turn out?" asked Lem.

"Oh, neither. The cars can't leave the tracks, you know. If they did, we might all be killed. The engineer, in case of obstructions, gives a signal with the whistle which the brakemen understand, and who hasten



to apply the brakes and stop the cars before there is a collision," replied Ernest.

"Does the engineer allers blow the whistle as a warnin' when he sees suthin'?"

"Yes—or at least, he means to."

The information hardly operated to calm Lem's nerves, for at every sound of the whistle thereafter he would clutch the seat-arms, and anxiously inquire of Ernest if they "wan't going ter have another circus," or "if he s'posed the brakeman heard the whistle?" And once, at a very long and loud blast he became very much exercised because the brakeman sat complacently on his seat, and asked Ernest if he didn't think he'd better go and order the "hardened sinner ter chain the wheel, if he didn't want his head broke."

Ernest persuaded him that it would not be best to interfere with the management of the road; and after awhile, as there had been no more sudden stoppages, and they appeared to be still on terra firma, Lem became quite reconciled to the state of affairs.

At length, to the great satisfaction of the two travelers, the conductor called out "St. Albans." (This service of calling stations is now required only of brakemen.)

Ernest would have to wait some twenty minutes before he could continue his journey, and so he went out of the car with Lem. When they came to the engine, as they were walking toward the depot, Lem stopped, and pointing at it said to Ernest:

"Well, I dunno's I'm to be blamed if I dew feel



ruther shaky ridin' arter sich a hoss. I don't wonder the thing is hot and narvous with nothin' but bilin' water in its stummick. So the world goes. It must suit old Nick ter see men hitch up bilin' water and drive it, and it'll please him all the more if they can git hold er suthin' more danger's and more powerful to tear ter pieces and scald, and ter yank men and wimmen inter eternity in more wholesaler fashion."

Having relieved himself by these remarks and a deep sigh, Lem started off in search of his son.

From St. Albans to Montreal, Ernest, traveling alone, found everything favorable to a resumption of the work which Lem had so many times interrupted, and he entered into it with great delight, beginning almost the first moment after the train left St. Albans.

How many a man who builds a house upon the solid earth, "just as he wants it," finds when it is done, that it is not *just* the thing after all? Most builders, probably. The majority of builders after their work is done, believe if they were to build again, they would change their plans or work in one way and another. But is that true of castles built in the air? It would seem to be so, judging by Ernest's experience. If, on that journey, Ernest in his imagination saw one structure rapidly arise from the foundations, and at length stand completed—its towers and turrets looming in the red light made by the setting sun—he did twenty. And not one was perfect when it was done; and the last was as unsatisfactory as the first. And only as he drew near to Montreal—after he had built and demolished a score or more of



these fanciful edifices, did he discover that the real trouble with each was the *foundation*. Evidently he had never heard of Thoreau's wise injunction—or if he had, he had forgotten it.

“You have built a castle in the air? Then put a foundation under it.”

Put a foundation under a structure already built?—That was not the thought that came to Ernest as his train approached Montreal. But it was this: “I am afraid I was a fool for attempting to build until I *had* a foundation. The thing is impossible.” Then taking Agnes' last letter from his pocket, and reading it again very carefully, he said to himself:

“Somehow this don't read as it did. There is nothing here that warrants me in doing what I am. I wonder if—if—she will be *glad* to see me. I don't know but what she was glad of an excuse to get away from me. Father Le Grand knew more than he pretended as to Agnes' feelings towards me. If he knew she didn't—er—*like* me, why didn't he tell me, and let me stay at home?” Then he recalled with a sigh that the priest *had* discouraged him somewhat.

“Faint heart never won fair lady,” said courage, contemptuously.

“Be bold—be bold—be not too bold,” responded caution, gravely.

Such was the unsettled state of mind in which Ernest found himself when he got out of the cars at Montreal and took a coach for the Donnegami. He had been in the city several years before and had stopped at the ho-



tel mentioned, and so he decided to put up there now. It had been Ernest's intention to send a note to Agnes Sunday morning, apprising her of his presence in the city, and asking if he might see her in the evening. But when Sunday morning came, he did not do it. He hesitated ; he lost confidence in himself. He dreaded the ordeal—the meeting that was to decide his fate. What if he had been mistaken, and Agnes did not care for him ? Could he bear to hear her say so ? Could he endure the pitying look she would bestow upon him when she told him ? No, he could not. He should become a madman if he found he had won her *pity* instead of her *love*. He could stand her scorn, but her pity—anything but that ! The young man's pride must have spoken then.

How miserable he was, and he came there expecting to be made the happiest man in the world. Who can say that Satan is not the father of some forms of doubt, as he is said to be of lies ? And if he is, with what fiendish satisfaction he must contemplate the work of his offspring.

Ernest remained at the hotel for the greater part of the day. The morning hours dragged slowly, and he felt that he must do something to pass away the time, and so he smoked until he was tired of it, and finally threw away a newly-lighted cigar in disgust, declaring that the habit was a nuisance, and that he believed he should give it up.

At two o'clock he went to dinner. At three o'clock he stepped to the cigar stand near the office, purchased



a half dozen "Henry Clays," lighted one, and remarked to the attendant, that he must do something to kill time.

And so he was *killing time*—this young man who had been in such haste to reach the city and come into the presence of the woman he worshipped, that in glowing words he might declare his love—instead of doing as he intended when he left home.

What a change had come over him ! At home, in the "States" he passed for a very brave and manly sort of a fellow, but in the Dominion of Canada he certainly was acting strangely. Could it be possible that in and about the Donagami there was a preponderance of the "non-annexation" sentiment, and a large representation of that body of men in Canada who are afraid that the whole, or some part of the Dominion will yet be joined to the United States ?—and that Ernest, who was certainly a rabid annexationist when he left home had been led to modify his views, owing to the influences around him ? Or is there something in love itself, that will, under certain circumstances, impress its victim with the belief that no conveyance is fast enough to take him to the object of his affections, and then, when he reaches the city or town where she lives and is within half an hour's walk of her dwelling, substitute a restraining for a propelling force—smite the young man with an indisposition to go farther, torment him with ennui, and lead him to look anxiously about himself for some device to "kill time ?"

Let some professor of mental philosophy, or some



young man who has been swayed by these conflicting inclinations, answer.

It is to be presumed that, when between five and six o'clock Ernest left the Donegami, and started out for a walk, he had exhausted every remedy but that to overcome his listlessness. He used a heavy stick, for he was still a little lame. After travelling a short distance, he ejaculated :

“Hang it ! these pavements make my leg ache,” and then he added with a sigh : “My wounds seem to be forever healing.”

His wounds ?—He had more than one, then.

While pursuing his walk, he took from his pocket the scrap of paper Father Le Grand had given him, and looked at it, and once he stopped a man and made inquiries about the streets.

Of course the reader scarcely needs to be told that Ernest was looking for the street and house where Agnes lived. Such was the fact. And of course when at last he found the house, he made haste to reach the door and ring the bell. Such, however, was *not* the fact.

“This answers the description which Father Le Grand gave,” he said to himself as he turned a corner and saw a stone house covered with vines standing in an enclosure of its own. The grounds were of considerable size, and there were trees—just enough of them, Ernest thought—that added to its attractiveness.

“A pleasant place, surely,” thought Ernest, “and somehow I could hardly think of Agnes living in any



other. But isn't it"—contemplating it solemnly—"a little forbidding? I—I'm not certain of my welcome;" and then with still greater solemnity in his looks,—“If I—only knew—and didn't have to—ask.”

Pathetic situation! Think of it! He had come so far, and then stern necessity required that he must *ask* before he could find out what he wanted to know! He was lame, too—poor fellow!

He did not enter the gate, but passed along slowly with that peculiar limp of his which his friends had become familiar with,—and by which they would know him anywhere.

At the opposite corner of the lot he had noticed a clump of trees a little back from the sidewalk, and his intention was to get behind them where, unobserved, he could look at the house to his heart's content. He did not look towards the house as he went by it. He feared that would indicate to the occupants that he wished to be seen, and of course he did not.

He barely reached the cover of the trees when there sprang out from among them, a large dog—a cross between the Newfoundland and St. Bernard. He barked furiously and rushed toward the iron fence where, on the opposite side, he saw Ernest.

“Christian! Christian! Come back here! What do you mean, sir?” cried some one back of the trees, whom Ernest could not see.

He could not see, but he could hear, and ah! that voice! He recognized it, and in a twinkling he was his old self again.



As the brute turned and with a crestfallen air marched slowly back, Ernest added to his humiliation by calling after him, in a loud tone :

“Certainly, Christian—go back ! Is that the way you follow St. Paul’s injunction to entertain strangers ? What do you mean, sir ? You should ask my pardon.”

Was that an exclamation that reached Ernest from the midst of the evergreens ? He hardly dared to think so. There was a hurried movement there. He saw the branches tremble, the foliage part, and Agnes—the gentle rays of the departing sun touching her golden hair as if in blessing, and meeting the still gentler light which shone from those wonderful blue eyes—stood before him.

How beautiful she looked ! The sight of her nearly took away Ernest’s breath. How his heart did beat ! He was afraid she would hear it although she was at some distance from him.

“As you wouldn’t understand Christian’s language, I will apologize for him. And how is Mr. Foster ?” said the young lady, coming down to the fence, and extending her hand to Ernest.

“Monsieur is well,—I beg pardon—he is an invalid, traveling for his health.”

“Ah, is he ? He has my sympathy. Perhaps he would like to rest for a while. Will he come in ?”

“Will he ?—Well, that depends upon several things ; to wit : if he is invited,—if the man-eating Christian is restrained from making a meal of him,—and if he can find a gateway anywhere,” replied Ernest.



“And most of all upon whether he *wants* to or not,” remarked the young lady.

“Wants to—indeed ! Am I not ready to fall down from fatigue and long and painful exposure to—to—these infernally hard Canadian pavements ? I’ve been looking for some quiet nook with a—er—settee, ever since—for the last half hour. I do think, Miss Gleau-claude, that you have the hardest pavements and—hearts, in the Dominion, of any country I know of. Ah, isn’t that a driveway just below me ? Look out for the dog—I’m coming round.”

And around he went, and was soon seated on the long looked-for settee, in as pretty a spot as he was ever in. Opposite him sat Agnes. The dog lay on the grass between them.

“And, now,” said the young lady, after they had become seated, “tell me of my uncle,—is he well ?—and how fares the little world of Mortonville ?”

He complied with her request. He was happy to inform her that her uncle was well. And as to Mortonville—why, business was certainly good, and everything seemed to be going along well. But there was an impression—more or less general—that the place was under some sort of a cloud. It was not what it used to be. Why, perhaps no one could explain, but still it was a fact—and could not be disputed—that there were some who felt there was a lack of *sunshine* there, and among those of that way of thinking were Lem Baker and himself, and Lem like himself, had left the locality for a region where there was less humidity in the atmosphere



Having exhausted the topic of Mortonville, he proceeded to speak on others. Never had Ernest shown more vivacity or lightness of spirit than during the hour he sat with Miss Gleauclaude there beneath the evergreens. He often evoked her smiles and laughter by his banter and wit.

The sun went down. Twilight warned the young man that his companion would soon have to go into the house to escape being chilled. The young lady had already shown that she felt the change in the air by drawing her light shawl around her neck. Still a little longer they sat and talked.

Twilight was giving place to the darker shades of night. At length Miss Gleauclaude arose, and invited Ernest to go in. Without replying, he walked with her towards the house. Christian went with them, jumping about his mistress, and manifesting great affection for her.

More rapidly than in the world around him had the gloom deepened in Ernest's heart in that last half hour. The question which he so much dreaded to ask would not be required. It was already answered.

There are a thousand languages besides the speech of the lips, and ten thousand signs, in some of which love may, and often does, find an answer to its yearnings. The wish that Ernest's pride had expressed had been granted, the silent question asked ; and the answer was—Agnes did not love him. Such was the conclusion to which he was guided by the sense of love.

How terrible is the experience of the heart over which



the waves of such a disappointment roll ! Ernest's agonizing love would have prostrated itself before the priest's niece, hoping to find some relief from its pain by confessing and pleading, but his pride sternly forbade it to speak, or disclose itself, saying, " You shall not. I will help you when we get away. I will bind up your wounds,—it may be they are not mortal."

And he walked slowly with her towards the house, observing as they went with what kindness and gentleness she was endeavoring to make him understand that they were only friends, and could never be anything more. This she made apparent to him—not from any word she uttered, but through that voiceless language and those well-understood signs.

He thought she affected surprise when, as they reached the piazza, he told her that he knew she would think him excusable if he did not go in, as he was a stranger to the streets, his hotel was some distance away, and it was then dark. And yet he felt sure that in spite of these expressions of surprise, she was relieved by the wise course he proposed to take.

And then with a formal touching of the hands and a good-bye, they parted.

" It is for all time," he said to himself, as he went with head down, towards the walk which led to the front gate.

" For all time?" repeated love. " Then my wound is mortal ! Oh, this pain ! this pain ! it is surely mortal."

And pride never once comforted love—never so much as answered.



As Ernest sought to find the walk in the darkness, he heard from Christian a peculiar howl. It was a long, low, plaintive moan. It was like a cry of distress. It affected him strangely. He paused, turned round, and groped quietly back for some distance. The light from the house shone down through the trellises to the ground. He saw Christian, and—what could it mean?—kneeling upon the ground, her hands clasping a trellis, and her head bowed upon her hands was the woman who he had made himself believe did not love him.

O, love,—you, who but the moment past were moaning over that mortal wound,—did *you* mean to be cruel?—did *you* mean to slay?

Never was there more swift transition from darkness to light, from indescribable misery to ineffable joy, than Ernest underwent at that moment. And then, moved with the urgency of love, he flew to the prostrate figure, lifted it from the ground, drew it close to himself, and cried, as he kissed the pale, tear-stained face :

“Oh, Agnes, darling!—is it the sign that my heart is not to break, and that my love is returned—tell me?”

The hazel eyes looked into the blue ones, and were very near to them just then. Four remarkable orbs—two pitted against two, and each pair gifted with a wonderful faculty of expression, and using that faculty to its utmost power,—this was the situation as Christian looked half suspiciously and half contentedly on, wagging his tail, and wondering when the tall but friendly stranger was going to let Agnes go.

A few moments later Christian followed the two



young people into the house, and seeing them enter the drawing-room and go to the opposite side of it to a small alcove where *he* had often taken a nap, concluded that his mistress had at last reached a safe haven, and immediately stretched himself on a rug in the hall, and proceeded to take the rest which he felt belonged to him.

When at a certain,—or rather uncertain hour of the night, Ernest and Agnes came from the house and walked towards the gate, Ernest was just as much a stranger to the streets of Montreal, his hotel was just as far away, and the night was as dark, as when three hours—more or less—before, he had made these circumstances his excuse for hurrying away. But why attempt to hold lovers to consistency? It is not only useless to do so, but wrong.

The door being left open, Christian took the opportunity to go out and see that all was well.

“Ah, my pious friend,” said Ernest, as the dog came near, “I owe much to you. I shall insist upon your having a medal, and being annexed to the United States.” And he patted Christian on the head as he spoke.

The dog replied with a loud bark which resounded through the silent street.

“Be quiet, Christian!” commanded Agnes in a whisper.

“Yes, hush, for Heaven’s sake!” added Ernest, “lest the natives are aroused, and learn my treasonable intentions.”

How many last words fond lovers turn again and again to utter at every parting, although that parting



be but for a few hours. But now the time had come when these two must say their *very last* words for that meeting. These were said at the gate, as Agnes declared and Ernest had agreed they should be.

There was nothing more to tell than had been told to each other a hundred times—in the last few hours. But these were their farewells, which the stars were to witness.

O, favored castle-builder! O, unspeakably happy man! Could the sweetest dream that ever blessed your sleep be compared for a moment with your experience then, when those white arms were about your neck, that golden head upon your shoulder, and that pure soul looking from its fair tabernacle into your eyes, asked :

“Oh, Ernest, are you sure,—are you *sure* that you *do* love me with *all* your heart?”

It was certainly a pardonable thing that you drew her a little closer—if closer she could come—as you replied :

“Yes—*sure—sure*. And me, Agnes? Repeat the precious words you said,—I cannot hear them often enough.”

“I *do* love you, *Er-nest*, more than I can tell you how much.”

It is doubtful if her English or her accent struck Ernest as peculiar as she said this, but what she said, and what she looked, was peculiarly fitted to satisfy the longings of his heart.

“O, Agnes !”



“O, Ernest !”

One look, in which each heart read the love, the promise, and the joy of the other ; one long embrace ; another kiss, sealing once more the pledges made, and they parted.



## CHAPTER XIII.

Ernest took an early train Monday morning for home, and a telegram sent him by Mr. Morton to inform him of his father's serious illness and to urge his speedy return, never reached him.

He arrived at Salem Falls at eight o'clock in the evening, where Mr. Morton's driver met him and told him what had befallen his father. On Sunday morning the minister had arisen to give out his text, when suddenly he put his hand to his head, staggered backward and then fell heavily upon the platform. He was taken up in an unconscious state and carried home; and since then the reports from the parsonage were not calculated to brighten the gloom that had settled upon the pastor's people. Ernest had not been free from anxiety regarding matters at home, but he was entirely unprepared for the tragic news that awaited him.

"Perhaps I have killed him," he said to himself. "But it would have killed me had I obeyed him."

And then one desire took possession of him—to reach that stricken parent, and minister to him.

When he reached home, Dr. Douglas was just getting into his buggy to drive away. Ernest asked his opinion about his father. The doctor replied that he was a little more hopeful than he had been the day before, but he



was still very anxious. He said there was no telling what the end was to be. The minister had evidently suffered a sort of nervous shock. From that, he had nearly recovered. His circulation was good, and, in short, there was nothing in his physical condition that was alarming. But that could not be said of his mental state. There was something in that which was perplexing and distressing at least, even if it did not indicate the approach of that most deplorable calamity that can befall a human being—the loss of reason.

“But we will hope for the best,” said the doctor in conclusion, and then drove away.

Ernest entered the house and took off his things in the hall without being heard. He went directly to his father’s room. His father had just dropped off to sleep, and his mother raised her hand as a sign for him not to enter, and then came out to him, drew him a little way from the door, threw her arms around his neck and burst into tears.

“Oh, Ernest,” she cried, “what does it all mean? Why has this come upon him?”

“God only knows! But we must bear up, mother,” he replied, kissing her tenderly.

After his mother had regained her calmness, Ernest went to the dining-room where the servant had supper waiting for him, partook of a light meal, and then returned to the sick room to watch through the night.

His father was still sleeping. Ernest took from his mother the directions the doctor had left, and then he prevailed on her to retire for the night. And he was



left alone with his father, who slept so soundly and well for the next hour or more that Ernest found it hard to believe that he was in a very bad way.

Soon after his father awoke, Ernest noticed that he grew very restless, and that as he turned his face towards him from time to time, it had the expression of one suffering from fright or from dread of something.

“Father, can I do anything for you?” he asked.

“No, nothing now. I am glad to see that you are well, Ernest. I feared I had harmed you—and I dared not ask, lest my fears be confirmed. Is your mother well?”

“O, yes, she is well, and has retired,” replied Ernest.

“It relieves me. For I could not get away from the thought that I had killed one of you. Haven’t I injured either of you, Ernest?”

“Why, certainly not. What an idea!” cried Ernest, smiling at his father, but inwardly shuddering.

“What *have* I done? I feel that I have committed the unpardonable sin,—that God has cast me off, and that I stand a felon in the eyes of mankind.”

“It’s all a mistake, father, you have had a bad dream—that is all.”

“It *is* a bad dream,” exclaimed the minister, quickly rising to a sitting posture, “a very bad one—a *fearful* one. Why don’t you awaken me, Ernest? My back is on fire, my arms burn; my muscles twitch; I see nothing but murderous implements that are within my reach. Over and over again something says to me ‘you are



thinking of doing this awful deed. You think you must do it—that you can't help doing it. You'll *do* it. You'll *surely* do it yet.' Can nothing stop me? Why don't you awaken me?—why don't you hold me, Ernest?"

These wild words sent a cold chill through Ernest. But springing up, he seized his father by both arms and laid him back upon the bed. The minister put forth all his strength to rise again, but he could not do it. He was no match for his muscular son. At last, giving up the struggle, he said, "There, that will do, Ernest. I sha'n't try any more at present. You did well. You overcame that dreadful *It* that suggests these horrible things, and urges me on to do them. You must watch me, Ernest. You must restrain me, and if I grow worse, put me at once into an asylum."

After remaining quiet for some time, the minister turned towards his son and asked,

"Have I ever harmed any one, Ernest?"

"No, never," replied his son.

"I am very glad. Tell me that often; and make me understand that I *must not*," said his father.

Ernest saw in this request a hint of what his father's shattered mind needed, namely, the interposition of a stronger will to break the current of its own morbid and fatal tendencies, and to make it see and do right in spite of that awful *It* in whose clutch so many enfeebled minds are carried to a fearful doom.

Ernest acted in accordance with this hint for many days, from time to time reminding his father, as he ha



requested, that he had injured no one; and charging him solemnly to see to it that he raised not his hand against any person, lest otherwise he should really commit the unpardonable sin.

Through the remainder of that night the minister got considerable rest. He would awake at intervals and manifest some uneasiness, but after watching his son for some time, become quieter, and then drop off to sleep again. The presence of his son, after that one struggle, tended to subdue his nervousness.

Ernest was very anxious to keep from the public a knowledge of the mental condition of his father ; and to that end he and his mother were the only persons beside the doctor who saw him. Ernest remained with him at night, and in the daytime got what sleep he could, in an adjoining room, while his mother was at the sick bed.

But one night, being much fatigued, Ernest fell asleep in his chair. He awoke, and with horror saw his father standing by his dressing case in the act of taking a razor from the drawer. Ernest barely reached him in time to prevent his purpose.

After that, Ernest did not dare leave his mother with him alone—not even in the daytime, but for several weeks attempted the exclusive care of his father. Every dangerous tool was taken out of the sick room, and at night the door was locked. Doctor Douglas would remain several hours with the patient every day, during which time Ernest would drop upon the bed in the next room and get a little rest.

This state of things could not last. The task which



the minister's son had set for himself was beyond human power to perform.

Father Le Grand, who was in the habit of coming over every two or three days, when the doctor was there to learn of the minister's condition, noticed Ernest's increasing pallor and weakness, and remonstrated with him for attempting to do so much. And when, after much urging, Ernest told him the truth about his father, the priest offered to share in the care of the sick man.

At first, Ernest—considering the relations which had existed between his father and the priest—could not think favorably of the offer. But the exigency of the case, and the priest's earnest desire to be of help to the family constrained him to consent to Father Le Grand's proposition, provided his mother made no objections, and his father did not resent it.

Mrs. Foster, who for some time previous to these days of trouble, had come to rely quite as much on the judgment of her son as of her husband on many matters, left the question for Ernest to decide.

Whether at this time the interview with the priest in the grove, and all events and circumstances which led up to it, and that followed it, had passed from the memory of the minister, it would be impossible to say.

Neither was it possible to tell whether he knew Father Le Grand that evening when Ernest took him into the room, saying as he did so :

“Father, here is a friend who has consented to come in frequently and sit with you.”



"A friend?" responded the minister. "I have many visitors, most of them enemies. A friend is surely welcome."

The priest urged the matter so hard that Ernest permitted him to watch several nights in succession, while he himself went to bed, and attended his father through the day. After Father Le Grand became satisfied that Ernest had made up for his loss of sleep, the two divided the night watching between them.

One night when Father Le Grand was with the minister, the latter woke out of a long and sound sleep, and discovered the priest kneeling by the bed in prayer. The minister did not move lest he should interrupt him, but when the priest had resumed his seat said to him :

"Was it for me?"

"Yes," said Father Le Grand.

"How often have you done this?" asked the minister.

"Every night that I have been here," was the reply.

"I think your medicine agrees with me. Continue as you have been doing," said the minister.

Ernest had instructed Father Le Grand, and each made a practice of saying to the patient several times during the night, "*You have never harmed a human being and you must see that you do not.*"

Within two weeks after Father Le Grand began to attend the minister, the latter surprised him by replying to this cautionary declaration :

"So Ernest told me last night." And he surprised Ernest the next night by saying, "So my friend charges me when he is here. You see my memory is improving."



The long rest of the minister was certainly telling in his favor. Besides the improvement in his memory, there were other hopeful signs which were a great comfort to his wife and son. He slept longer at a time ; his nervousness decreased, and his gloomy spells grew less infrequent. He talked more. With his wife and Ernest he never discussed moral or religious questions. But with Father Le Grand he would sometimes venture to touch upon them.

On one occasion when he was alone with the priest, he observed :

“ ‘God is a consuming fire,’—so we read.”

“ ‘God is love,’ we also read,” replied the priest.

“I repeated a once favorite text of mine. But both of these declarations are found in the Book ; and one I suppose is as strong as the other.”

“I don’t agree,” said the priest.”

“Don’t you? Well, now, I hardly expected you would controvert that statement. Won’t you give me your reasons for denying that these two declarations are of equal force?”

“Love is an *attribute* of God ; it is *inherent* in his nature. If he is also a consuming fire, he is so only as a *means to an end*,” answered Father Le Grand.

“Does your Bible teach that?” asked the minister.

“*Yours* does, and that is more conclusive—to you,” said Father Le Grand.

“Why quote from a Book you do not believe?” questioned the other.

“Do you read my Bible?” returned the priest,



“No.”

“So I presumed,” remarked the priest. “Why, then, should I take a text from a book you will not read?”

“That is the priest speaking, between whom and the minister there is, I fear, ineradicable antagonism. But in the interest of peace and harmony, I will venture to say that I do not think Monsieur Le Grand (it was the first time he had spoken the name since he was sick) the *man* is the worst person in the world.”

“It is no light compliment that places me above *any* one—when it comes from Monsieur Foster. I congratulate myself,” responded Father Le Grand, smiling and bowing.

“I am having an experience,” resumed the minister, “that is unlike anything I have ever had before. From great activity, I have been forced into idleness. The wind which bore my ship along, increased in velocity until it became a gale—a hurricane; and shipwreck threatened me. But the storm passed; and in the lull that has succeeded it, I find myself anchored in quiet waters. And strange as it may seem, I at present find I have no desire to weigh anchor, hoist sail, and move out into the open sea of life where I have in the years gone by won—as I esteemed them—many victories, and suffered some defeats. No, I am in no hurry to go. I am content to remain in this peaceful haven a little longer. For the first time in—O, in many, many years—I have within this week, realized what a delightful sensation rest is to a weary man.



“Just when I shall begin my work again I know not. Neither do I know just how I shall carry it on, but probably not quite in the old way, nor with the old spirit. The when and the how do not trouble me. In this sweet and restful moment, nothing troubles me,—not even the mistakes I have committed. For I know that God overlooks the misjudgments of a tired brain when the heart is honest; and man should. Rest—rest—how delicious it is! If there is not to be an enduring peace, there is at least a present truce. My brother, I make overtures of peace to—yes, even to the priest; and I extend the hand of friendship to the man.”

Father Le Grand seized the hand held out to him and with fervor replied :

“Amen! my brother. It shall be peace and friendship; and may God sanctify the compact to the good of men!”

Within a week from this time, the minister, with the aid of his son was making little excursions two or three times every fair day, out among the shrubs and flowers in his yard, and around his garden. And a little later—one pleasant Summer afternoon—the people of Mortonville were treated to another great surprise.

It was this: The Rev. Charles Foster and Father Le Grand, leaving the former's dwelling, and arm in arm walking slowly up the street and crossing the bridge—evidently bound for the house among the maples on the other side of the Shallow. As the little



world of Mortonville looked on and noticed the kindly, and even affectionate manner of these two men toward each other, it marveled—it marveled, but was not on the whole displeased.

Jim Dobson, who was called to the window to view this extraordinary spectacle, probably gave utterance to the sentiment of the great majority of the people as he exclaimed :

“ I declare ! Sho ! Well—well ! But why not ? Hain’t they ministers of peace ? Boys, ’taint allers practised, but the idee’s kerrect.”



#### XIV.

The Methodist church was "supplied" for nearly three months, and then the Rev. Charles Foster resumed the charge of it. He seemed almost like a stranger to the people; and indeed he was a new man, for he never became his old self again. There were a few in the church who regretted the change, and sighed for former methods, and mourned for the loss of the Rev. Charles Foster as he was. But the great majority, as they came to know him better, gave to the new man a welcome which they had never given to the old.

If Mr. Foster no longer started special revivals, it was because, as Jim Dobson said, "Every buddy's revived every time they go ter meetin'."

There is no reason to think that sin was less sinful to the mind of the minister at this time than in days that were gone, but it is quite certain that man—the sinner—had become vastly dearer to him. After the experiences he had recently gone through which ended in a long, perfect, and saving rest, the world never again seemed to him so vile and hateful as it once did. He saw good in men that before escaped his notice. Even among people outside of the church he saw many acts of charity, love and fortitude that he



owned were Christ-like ; and he was forced to admit that there were many Christians who were not church members. There was a time when such an admission would have been impossible for him.

“ But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three ; and the greatest of these is Love.”

Many a minister of the Gospel had taken these words of Paul the Apostle for a text to a sermon. But the Rev. Charles Foster never had. Heretofore in his search for a text, he had passed over these words often, but they had never arrested his attention. There was a very great and sweeping truth made known in them, but he had not comprehended it.

But now that important declaration of Paul made a powerful impression on his mind, and he saw in it not simply a text for a sermon now and then, but a principle which he resolved should henceforth control his whole life in his dealings with men. He had always hated sin, and during the time of the revival he was rapidly approaching a point where his aversion would take in the sinner with his misdeeds. He had manifested at that time a sort of fierceness in his onslaught upon sinners ; and in his outspoken condemnation of what he deemed the crying misdemeanors of the community—smoking and dancing—he showed a feeling akin to spite toward the guilty parties. The result had been that those who had been frightened into joining the church were few in number, in comparison with those who were driven away.



With Love comes hope, confidence, cheerfulness—"all things."

The world was scarcely any better now than then, but it seemed to be to the Rev. Charles Foster. The sunshine was not more plentiful nor beautiful now than formerly, but there were rays of light from beyond the sun, that streamed in upon the soul of the minister, and were reflected out upon all things around, and the prospect was certainly brighter to him.

From this new standpoint he studied his son. He ceased to be censorious towards him, and very soon discovered in him a spirit so pure, unselfish and noble, that he opened wide the door of his heart and took him in unreservedly, and with him—Agnes.

And more than that—much more—he let in the whole brotherhood of mankind. Something in his experience had changed the man marvelously. He seemed inspired with a love for men. He preached as never before. His audiences were powerfully moved, and his name spread abroad. And his preaching and manner of approaching the people began to tell.

If he held as tenaciously as ever to the doctrine of total depravity, he did not, as formerly, harden hearts by declaring that the greater part of those who heard him, and most of those in the community who did not, were altogether vile in the sight of God, that the multitude were given over to debasing habits and frivolous pleasures. But moved by the broader and more patient love for mankind which distinguished his later from his early ministry, he found no use for harsh epithets nor



words of terror to convince men that they must look to the God of hope and love in order to make sure of that peace and joy which cannot be removed nor shaken. He never again referred specifically to any amusement in which some were wont to indulge, but drawn very near to the people by his love, through him the love of Christ touched their hearts and convinced them that the world with all its pleasures could not satisfy the deep longings of the soul.

From the time he resumed his work until his pastorate in Mortonville ended, so great was the religious interest that it might with truth be characterized as a long and uninterrupted "revival," and no communion passed without some additions to the church.

So far from being envious of his brother in the ministry, Father Le Grand expressed satisfaction at seeing a work prosper which must do good rather than harm. He commended the earnestness of the Protestants to his own people, and urged them to imitate it. Such was the catholicity and independency of the priest's spirit that on one or two occasions he strolled into an evening meeting of Mr. Foster's, taking a seat in the back part of the room. And although when the Methodist clergyman invited him to take part, he shook his head and kept silent, at the close of the meeting he pressed Mr. Foster's hand, and said fervently, "God bless you in your good work, my brother! I rejoice in it, though forbidden to work with you, and in coming here have laid myself open to censure."

Mr. Morton spoke of the time as a "period of *real*



religious feeling," and for several reasons was pleased to see the friendly relations existing between minister and priest, and especially because at this time it favored a project which he had in view.

He believed the time was fully ripe for him to make known what that plan was. And so he invited the two churchmen and Ernest to take tea at his house on a certain evening that he might disclose it to them. The evening came; the guests met the host; and at length the tea was over.

"Now, gentlemen," began Mr. Morton, "if you will give me your attention, you will learn why I have asked you to come together. In the early days of the village it was thought to be a wise and good thing to erect a church where the gospel could be preached by a follower of Wesley; and I joined in helping to build such a house. It was an excellent move. Later on, it seemed desirable that a large number of worthy foreigners who had come here to live, should be accommodated with a place where they could worship God in a manner after their own heart. I helped them to get it. Thus we have a wholly Protestant and a wholly Catholic church. Who ever dreamed that more than these would be required to meet the wants of this village? And yet, gentlemen in the ministry, you are likely to have a rival to your churches."

"Indeed! What now?" exclaimed the churchmen,

"Yes," continued the manufacturer, "it seems that there has lately arisen a demand for a house which is to be half Protestant and half Catholic. The religion to



which this new house is to be dedicated is a very old one. I think that neither of yours antedates it. It is called 'The religion of love.' I haven't been asked to contribute to the erection of this temple, but knowing the parties who are to worship (one another) there, and being very friendly to them, and desiring to help every religious organization that is really needed in the community, I have decided to build this edifice myself without calling on other parties for contributions. I presume I shall need to call on my superintendent for his views as to the style and size of the structure, and also as to the date when it must be completed. As I am getting to be an old man, and life is uncertain, I hope the time is very near when it will be wanted. I desire to live to see it occupied. Gentlemen of the ministry, you will perhaps think that I—being a heathen—am interesting myself a great deal in church matters, but you must bear with me, remembering that it is a weakness of mine to intermeddle with every enterprise that concerns the village. Come, show your hand, gentlemen. What stand are the *first* and the *second* church going to take in reference to the *third*? Are they going to welcome it, extend the hand of Christian fellowship to it, and bless it?—or are they to envy it, treat it coldly, and distrust it? Speak out and let us know."

For a moment after the manufacturer closed, there was silence. Then Mr. Foster rose, and in a broken voice said :

"May God bless you for what you have done and propose to do for my son! And may He grant that you



shall never feel that your confidence and regard have been misplaced.”

Turning then and going to Ernest's side, he stooped and kissed him affectionately upon the forehead, and in doing so, dropped a tear there. “This is my answer to your question, Mr. Morton. This shall be my welcome to him and his,” he said.

“And this is mine,” added Father Le Grand, giving his hand to Ernest.

“I suppose your churches will approve this agreement, gentlemen,” remarked the manufacturer.

He was assured that there was no doubt about it.

No one was more surprised than Ernest as Mr. Morton made known his very generous purpose. Taking advantage of the first opportunity that offered, he attempted to express in words his gratitude to his kind patron, but he broke down and was compelled to let his suffused eyes and trembling lips speak his thanks, which they did more eloquently and effectually than words could have done it.

Ernest and Agnes were married the next May—a few days only more than a year from their informal and romantic introduction to each other.

Mr. Morton was better than his word. For not only did he build and have ready a very pretty house for the young couple, but he gave Ernest, as an additional wedding present, an interest in the business of Humphrey, Morton & Son.

The wedding was a very notable affair for Mortonville.



There was a double ceremony. First, at the Catholic chapel Ernest and Agnes were made one by Father Le Grand, in the presence of a full house; then at the Methodist church, which was also filled to its utmost capacity,—the Rev. Charles Foster officiating, they solemnly promised to be loving and true until death did them part.

And how prospered this house which was half Protestant and half Catholic? Was it a house divided against itself? Never for a moment. God blessed it, and smiled upon it. The time which Ernest had expressed a hope would one day come, when he and Agnes could “talk freely together upon the great theme of life,” telling to each other frankly their true thoughts—their deepest and most solemn thoughts regarding it—had now come.

What was the result? Which of the two was changed over? Did “Saint Agnes” meet the gloomy expectations of a certain few of the most strict Methodist brothers and sisters, and make a Catholic of Ernest? These questions are soon answered.

Not long before the Rev. Charles Foster left Mortonville for another field, Agnes and Ernest were talking about his going.

“What do you say to joining your father’s church before he leaves?” asked Agnes.

“You and I?” said Ernest.

“O, no, dear—but you. You know how happy it would make your father and mother, and—don’t you think you would feel better too?”



“ Singular, Agnes, but do you know that your thoughts are my thoughts on this matter? Ever since you told me the other day that when you came to know my father and mother well, you reached the conclusion that no one could go far astray in following such intelligent and good people, but that you knew your uncle was also both wise and good, and that you should never confide in any other spiritual adviser as long as he remained in Mortonville, I have felt that we could worship God devoutly and truly together even though one administer the sacrament to you and another to me. But if they attempt by reason of their faith to divide—”

Agnes flew to her husband and throwing her arms about his neck, exclaimed :

“ Divide us ! They shall *never* do it. They never *can* ! We belong to each other, and to God, whom we can serve without *their* aid when their advice tends to separate us.”

“ Agnes, you are an angel—but I think I have said that before. The fact is, you make me repeat myself quite often,” said Ernest, kissing his wife.

And so it came about at last that Ernest was taken into the Methodist church while his father was in Mortonville. It is safe to say that never in his life had the Rev. Charles Foster performed any service that afforded him so much joy as on that occasion.

Many years have passed since the scenes recorded in these pages took place. Mortonville is still prosperous, and is growing, its mills still busy, but the founder of



the village and the builder of the mills went long ago to his final resting-place.

By his side sleeps his wife. A noble and beautiful woman she had indeed been, and a sharer with him for more than fifty years in whatever life brought, of joy or sorrow.

Though a granite shaft bears his name, and shows the world where Humphrey Morton sleeps, and will while it stands keep his name where the passer-by can read it, the monument which best and most surely perpetuates his name and character is Mortonville itself; which he caused to spring up from a veritable wilderness. And not only the many and substantial structures he erected and the thriving business which he created will continue to remind the world of him, but the lessons in integrity, honesty, thrift, and persistency in every good undertaking, which he taught to all who ever worked for him, as well as the example of these virtues which he set, will go on bearing fruit for good as long as the world stands.

Uncle Bina and Sister Wolcott have joined the innumerable company of saints on the other side. Gone, too, are "Old Wrinkles" and that other nameless person who was not an admirer of his, to a land—let us hope—where animosities do not shape men's actions.

Nathan Styles still tarries, an old man; and since he learned that people refused to take him seriously, or to look upon him as a great man, he has grown cynical and rarely goes to church. Lem Baker says, "You can



now say of Styles what you couldn't truly say afore, n' that is, he hain't no hypocrite—he's jest what he seems ter be."

Jim Dobson is still a pillar in the church, a consistent Christian, a good workman, and retains his position in the mill, and although a good distance beyond sixty, he is quite active, and hardly seems old. His son "Jimmy" is a great comfort to him. He is very proud of him and boasts of the boy's talents, and says he is destined to beat his father "all holler."

Hoffman lived to be very old, and became very deaf. His love of argument left him as old age came upon him, and although a great many were not willing to take his interpretations of the Bible, his firm belief in that supreme book was never doubted, and his upright life and gentleness at last won him the regard and respect of all. He always expected to see the second coming of Christ. He believed that the Saviour would be seen by all men when he came. The old man had the time fixed when Christ was to come. He had figured it all out, and had no question about the month and the day, although he admitted that he had been mistaken two or three times before. Though men smiled at this strange notion of the old Millerite, they felt a tender respect for him. Christ came indeed for the devout old man, but not in the eyes of the whole world, nor when this peculiar but faithful believer of his predicted. He came one night months before the time set by the Adventist, and called him while he was in bed asleep.



Lem Baker never traveled on the cars again after returning from St. Albans. On the way back the train met with an accident and was brought to such a sudden stop that Lem—as he expressed it—“was throwed half way to Mortonville afore he lighted.” He was so terrified that he walked the remainder of the distance—a hundred miles or more. He continues to exercise his talent for inventing, and one of his inventions is serving a good purpose in the mill and pays him a small royalty. Lem’s reputation as lemonade-mixer was seriously damaged a few years ago by the act of some roguish young fellows who, on the sly, deposited a peck of fine salt in a barrel of the liquid after he had got it all ready for use. It was several years before the trick was found out, and in the mean time Lem concluded to let some one else serve the public in “gittin’ up the mixer.”

Ernest’s father, now much too old to preach, and his mother, are spending their last days with him. Father Le Grand died some ten years ago. The friendship which sprang up between the minister and priest at the time the former was recovering from his illness, never lessened, but rather increased and grew more and more into real affection. In their old age, and after Mr. Foster came to live with Ernest they saw much of each other, and often had long and frank talks together on matters of religion. And in their apprehension of the love of God and His plan for the salvation of men, they often forgot the vast difference that existed, in the opinion of the world, between the churches which they represented,



and breathed together a prayer that the church universal might prosper, and that all men might be brought into it. And when they parted for the last time on earth, it was with a cheerful hope and firm conviction in the minds of both that they should meet again, on the other side of the dark valley, never to be separated.

THE END.















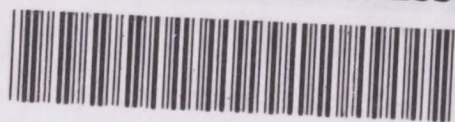








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